

December 2022

Published and distributed by Discreet Music

www.discreetmusic.se

THE UNEARTHED PUZZLE

Chronicling 47 James Ferraro and Spencer Clark Artefacts

By Martin Nilsson

A Compendium of Crystal Promenades, Dark Temples and Washed-out Beaches



James Ferraro - American Cyborg (collage, 2009)

*Earlier this year, I was inspired while reading Matthias Andersson's phenomenal publication **Speaker Crackle In The Garden**, in which he goes through a large selection of his vast collection of Peter King lathe cuts from the New Zealand underground. I felt the urge to do something similar, and then I realized that I have a reasonable collection of musical items originating at the hands of James Ferraro and Spencer Clark, which has led me to writing this compendium. It is possible that there are many other people on this planet that own more **Skaters** and **Skaters** related releases than I do that could write a more all-encompassing compendium about them, but that would do nothing to satisfy my impulse to write about all the releases that I actually do own, so I intend to do this regardless. Many of the releases that I don't own are possible to listen to online or as downloads, but it is my intention to only go through the ones that I have in my collection.*

In order to have this compendium follow an intended trajectory, I have also limited my selection somewhat to frame the works that I feel collectively make up a cohesive whole. This whole has a shape and feel that to me has distinct borders and limits. What I am referring to is hard to entirely pin down, but the one thing that I feel is at the core of it is the feeling of something that has been unearthed, found, catalogued and then displayed. Even the releases that deal with contemporary, or even future scenarios feel like relics, disjointed from their temporal origins.

*My first encounter with the **Skaters** was at a live show in a small bar in Malmö in the spring of 2007, where they played with **Tomutonttu**, **Nuslux** and **Family Underground**. I had not heard them at the time, and I think that I went because I liked **Family Underground**. I was mesmerized by the **Skaters**, James and Spencer, on their knees on the floor, with their backs toward the audience that crowded around them in the tight space of the bar. I remember*

them both using a microphone and a small Casio keyboard each, plugged into two small combo amplifiers. I ended up releasing a recording of the set Nuslux played that night on my label Oh No, More Tapes! as the Nuslux Folköl cd-r. Following that show, I made sure to see Spencer and James whenever they were close by.

Geographically and temporally, the Skaters were part of the US noise scene, or rather the part of the American experimental underground that was aligned with the current noise scene activities of the time, sharing bills and labels across the country with their noise and noise-adjacent domestic contemporaries, but mainly in contrast or at least in noticeable difference to their label mates. Instead, they to a greater extent shared expressive commonality in both sound and outlook to bands, artists and labels in places like New Zealand and Finland, though without having any part of these scenes sound anything like them either. This pan-continental camaraderie was made evident by the Skaters releases that were put out by Finnish labels such as Lal Lal Lal and 267 Lattajaa, as well as The Skaters touring with Uton, Nuslux, Avarus and the like, and releases on Antony Milton's New Zealand label PseudoArcana, as well as Ferraro putting out the early 2004 Naturalism compilation cd-r on Nature Tape Limb that featured Anthony Milton and Clayton Noone. Of course, the Skaters also had material put out by various other European labels such as Chocolate Monk, Sick Head and Puik, and they were by no means out of place in either bin, but in my mind, they had more of a common denominator in how they presented their music with, for instance, NZ label Corpus Hermeticum, and especially the way in which that label included the arcane publication Logopandocy in some of its releases, a move which was echoed on the Skaters' own releases in forms of accompanying written little pieces of psychedelic mysticism. Granted, Logopandocy was much more elaborate than the briefer mystical liner notes that were common on Skaters releases, but the intention shared a heavy commonality, as well as the low contrast free form drone-approach to the music as many of the New Zealand free noise luminaries. Likewise, their tendencies toward the less aggressive and more playful, as well as their reliance on small acoustic instruments and toy electronics gave them a direct expressive connection to the isolated and idiosyncratic

Finnish psychedelic improv folk scene that included names like Fricara Pacchu, Uton and Kemiälliset Ystävät. At least, this is how it could be perceived from the outside. Heck, all of this could also be disregarded and the Skaters could be described as a forgotten category of Folkways Records, as the recordings sound like communal music of undeterminable origin, recorded in a way that makes it sound lost in time. Their appearance in this setting would at least make more sonic sense than their actual appearance on the noise compilation California 10 LP boxed set put out by RRR, Troniks and Ground Fault. I mean, noisy they were, but never high gain or high volume, even at their noisiest. Instead, they made sounds that lived their life as shadow silhouettes of what they actually were, representing and evoking images that could never be clearly seen. As time wore on both Ferraro and Clark relocated to various places in Europe, and for a while they had Antwerp as their base, but at this point their musical output was almost entirely rewired into their respective cadre of solo projects, all of which dwelled in the same low contrast shadow land, though where at times the images conjured would have sharper edges.

As the Skaters and perhaps even more as through their myriad of monikers and alter-egos, Spencer and James created not only a feeling or general idea, but an entire universe with very potentially real places to drift away into, not just throughout the listening process but to remain in indefinitely. This universe was defined enough to be envisioned, yet illusive enough to feel singular to the individual listener. It was also never presented as a simulated experience, but rather was mediated through various alienating maneuvers, always putting the listener in the position of secondary experience, eavesdropping or looking at the subject matter through a mediator or barrier. In an academic context this would be considered as a use of verfremdungseffekt, but let's not dwell on definitions.

Creating their music and artwork in a decidedly frugal manner, using toy keyboards, a karaoke machine, thrifted hand drums and guitars, found tapes and boomboxes, photocopy collages and pause button mixing, Spencer and James managed to create releases that in themselves feel like precious gemstones, despite being compiled from the cheapest materials to be found at the

office supply store. This is also sometimes reflected in their secondhand market value, where it is also evident that the releases they put out on their own labels almost without fail are markedly more expensive than releases on other labels.

At the later stages of the recording chronology handled in the following pages of this compendium, both Spencer and James updated their gear to slightly larger and more professional instruments, which added depth and color to their soundscapes, all while they remained within the same universe they initially created. The small number runs of these releases, as well as their quite overwhelming quantity made it fairly impossible to collect them all as they were being released, and at the price most of them fetch nowadays it would be an even more daunting task, as well as a financially difficult one. At the same time, I doubt that ever was the point even, whereas the releases in themselves feel like documents, postcards, or ephemeral essays, glimpses into a variety of more or less non-tangible universes, places that you never can get the entire picture of, and the scarcity of the material offerings make them a little bit more talismanic and special. It is a puzzle that can never fully be finished, because of its elusive nature, and even if you in fact did own all of the releases, you'd still be a couple of pieces short, and where the hell did you get that kind of money, anyway?

The distribution of releases discussed herein has a significant tilt toward Ferraro, but the distribution is also somewhat proportional to their recorded output. Between 2006 and 2010, Ferraro recorded and released music with a furious fervor, which was not rivaled in quantity by Spencer Clark. I have chosen to omit the occasional collaborative release that incorporates anyone who is not James Ferraro or Spencer Clark, as the outside influence alters the material in a way that takes it out of its otherwise cohesive ecosystem, because I determined this publication to encompass the releases that I own that adhere to what I perceive to be a very coherent and continuous development and dialogue between Ferraro and Clark, both individually and as two parts of a whole.

Martin Nilsson

1. The Wooden Cupboard – Boiling the Animal in the Sky 3" cd-r 2004 (PseudoArcana)

This is one of the first outings of any of the Skaters affiliated recordings that I own. Boiling the Animal in the Sky is the first of three releases under the name The Wooden Cupboard, one of Ferraro's earliest solo projects. Released in 2004 on Antony Milton's New Zealand based PseudoArcana label, on the for the time quite popular 3" cd-r format in a pro printed color sleeve depicting a couple of golden masks under the silhouette of a coniferous tree at dusk, this is to some extent a premonition of things to come. Using degraded midrange tape distortion and compression as an overall sound aesthetic, the disc leads off with cardboardy hand drums and dense vocal drone pads, accompanying the Tokens-style wordless falsetto vocals that constitute an often-used color on Ferraro's early palette. Twangy runs on an electric guitar weave through the first track that climaxes in frenzied wailings. The second track takes up the majority of the play time and starts off in more relaxed manner, with warm audible guitar strums accompanying whoops and wails that balance between wordless Yma Sumac-type excursions and full-on tropical bird choirs. As the track develops the guitar strumming intensifies and hand drums appear. Midway through we go through the eye of a needle and end up in a shadowy sound cavern while continuing the heavy focus on drums, guitars and wailing vocals. Edition of 120.

2. The Skaters – Dark Rye Bread LP 2004 (Humbug)

Despite having released a handful of recordings prior to the Dark Rye Bread LP, and despite the fact that fully realized albums might not even have been a format that ever really distinguished itself from the rest of their collective and individual production, this LP still feels like it was the first major outing, and a release that set the tone for the Skaters as a band. Building their music on a foundation of percussive elements, hand cymbals and small drums as well as some of the vocalizations that define the Skaters sound, with layers of droning and stretchy humming forming a founda-

tion for yips and ululations as well as some sort of proclaiming non-verbal speech to go on top of. Another element to the Skaters sound that appears this early is the immediate stop and the hard cut between tracks that throws the dynamic from low to high intensity in an instant. There is a heavy point of rotation and gravity emanating from *Dark Rye Bread*, a centripetal force that almost violently pulls you in, again quickly cutting into a completely different, glowing and pulsating orb type intensity accompanied by melodic falsetto vocal embellishments. The music eventually deep dives into an unfocused monophonic churning feedback loop that warps and twists like ferrofluid in a magnetic field. This record also contains a striking degree of atonal and grating textures, which while sometimes used effectively in smaller portions on other releases, is fairly uncharacteristic for the Skaters as a band. The last long track on the LP also contains dry room sounds, which is another Skater uncommonality.

Dark Rye Bread is a dense yet economic outing that slowly introduces most of the defining aspects of the Skaters sound, as well as a few elements that were left out on future recordings. The Humbug LP album cover is uncharacteristically unevocative and forgettable, depicting what looks like scratchy scribbles, or what could also be an impressionist painting of a top down perspective of a snowy taiga, or perhaps a microscopic image of mycelium, and while this would all make sense in the context of the music, the execution lacks the intriguing radiance of most other Skaters releases. The *Nature Tape Limb* cd-r issue (which I do not own) has a slightly more interesting cover with a collage of coniferous trees and unfocused forest environments. What also sets this record apart is that it includes a third performer, a person named Dan Bryant, under the Skaters name. This can be noticed with a bit of Skaters experience, as there is a sound source within these tracks that follow a rhythm and introduce textures that are not gelling in the same way that Ferraro's and Spencer's inputs are. In these regards, *Dark Rye Bread* is an atypical Skaters release, all while also laying down some ground rules for what would come to define the band's aural aesthetic. Not the most exciting Skaters release, but essential as a document of the foundation of what would succeed it.

Initially made in an edition of 300 copies, later re-released in 2007 in 500 copies. The cd-r version released on Ferraro's Nature Tape Limb in 2005 was made in an unknown quantity.

3. The Skaters - Pavillionous Miracles Of Circular Facet Dice cd-r 2005 (Chocolate Monk)

Six track cd-r, released on Dylan Nyoukis Chocolate Monk label, also re-released on Ferraro's Nature Tape Limb label in 2007. Black and white cover on a variety of colored cardstock, as was usual for Chocolate Monk at the time. Contained within the dusky shadows of that which is just out of reach, physically and conceptually, this recording has a sort of mischievous satyrian air. Pavillionous Miracles of Circular Facet Dice has an entirely vocal-centric constitution, layering different registers, textures and rhythms to evoke, for instance, what could be the cacophony of noises heard during a summer night in certain geographic locales, while simultaneously staging hallucinatory overlapping and melting apparitions, laughing beings behind masks, echoing in tunnels and caverns. Midway through, this recording switches its stance and becomes almost industrial, with pounding, rhythmic vocal textures and ritualistic hoots and hollers, which then transform into a frantic pit full of ghosts only to end up fully alien. The vocals are at the same time nightmarish and goofy, juxtaposing demonic howls with joyful yips and meows. The sounds are all far back in the distance and out of focus, which makes listening feel slightly voyeuristic. We can hear, but not clearly see, fragments of what is going on behind the veil. The cover image is a jumbled royal shape with crown, sword and orb in a matrix that also contain elements of old architecture. Edition unknown.

4. The Skaters – Gambling in Ohpa's Shadow cd-r 2005 (PseudoArcana)

Another release on New Zealand label PseudoArcana. The cover depicts what looks like a tapestry, torn by time and either water damaged or faded by exposure to light, containing a slightly kabbalistic scheme or faceted painting with a few faces or parts of faces that look like paintings by Raphael, Buddhist statues, ancient Egyptian frescoes, butterfly wings and flower petals, with a small octagram buried in the middle. There is, at least visually, an implication of appearance and facets of reality, especially in relation to time, as a central theme to this release. Skaters recordings tend to rely heavily on looping sounds, most often layered and overlapping in a way that make the individual loops less distinct and more of a tight weave, but this recording distinguishes itself in ways where it either lets the looping sounds present themselves as discrete units, or where the weave pattern is so loosely knit as to not really present any noticeable loops at all. A lot of Skaters recordings were also decidedly more noise oriented than any of Ferraro or Clarks solo outings, this being one of them. Gambling in Ohpa's Shadow is, with the exception of a single keyboard line and an instance of plucked guitar, almost entirely vocals based, at times with a lot of distortion, never really melodic and never fully textural either. There are constantly tonal elements and a lot of space between the sounds. There is very desolate atmosphere at the helm of Gambling in Ohpa's Shadow, and a very peculiar sense of scale, with a very vast level of depth while the majority of the sounds emanate from a place within close proximity. Edition unknown.

5. The Skaters – Crowned Purple Gowns CS 2005 (Lal Lal Lal)

Tape released on Finnish forest gnome label Lal Lal Lal, an imprint captained by three members of the shapeshifting psychedelic improv group Avarus, one of which is Roope Eronen, whose Nuslux outfit played the first Skaters show I ever went to. This one is way more dizzying than any of the ones that chronologically preceded it, though it shares the mischievous trickster aspects of

the Pavillionous Miracles of Circular Facet Dice cd-r. The music feels like it takes place within four walls, or within a number of connected marble rooms, with ceremonial secrets taking place just out of sight, behind pillars and in alcoves. The recording is spacious and not noticeably loop based, with layers of voices, some droningly praying and others singing little ditties to themselves. There is also a lot of percussive sounds, drums and clanging metallic objects. Jokers in robes laughing behind veils of smoke. If there ever was a temple jester asking you questions, this is what it would feel like. The B side is more of a mass situation, with a much denser and more frenzied sound. The cover is in full color and depicts a bearded man with a golden crown, with a superimposed upside-down renaissance painting of a child's face with an implied halo radiating round it. In the foreground there is also fragments of some kind of hieroglyph and in the background is more golden details of what could be a throne. The entire situation is then bordered by a golden frame, which collapses into an endless well of itself on the back panel. The tape itself has a crafted aluminum foil lightning bolt glued to the A side.

Released in an edition of 200 copies. Imagine individually folding and gluing 200 aluminum foil lightning bolts onto those tapes, yeesh.

6. Grippers Nother Onesers – Live at Slimer Beach 2009 LP (Olde English Spelling Bee)

Ok, so this was originally released as Lamborghini Crystal – Cool Runnings 1992, but I don't actually own that tape, I have the LP that Olde English Spelling Bee put out in 2009, under the alternate name of Grippers Nother Onesers – Live at Slimer Beach, which is what was printed on the gigantic poster that came with the original cassette, but as it was originally released in 2006, I will place it here for the sake of chronology. Lamborghini Crystal is perhaps the most well known project of this era of Ferraro recordings, and while the individual releases all have things that distinguish them from each other, the core identity of this project seems to be the impulse to make catchy pop songs within a fairly speci-

fic universe. Of course, what makes up this universe is a matter of interpretation, but the overall themes seem to revolve around 1960's-1990's pop culture, the magical potential in the disposable aspects of everyday life, cheap thrills, Dracula and a lot of other cartoony satanic/demonic activity. The Lamborghini Crystal project also introduces the elusive band member J.C. Peavey, who may or may not be a real person (depending on how you define "real" and "person").


This first outing kicks it off by sampling the intro to Ray Parker Jr's Ghostbusters theme, overlaid with cartoony demonic grunts, and then directly goes into pop territory, using steady drumbeats, melodic bass lines and guitar and keyboard arrangements, together with soulful wordless falsetto vocals. I say wordless, there might be words being sung, but they are encased in layers of tape hiss, compression and reverb to the point where they resemble something you'd hear through your older sister's bedroom wall. The songs on this tape are "normal" compared to the textured hymns of smoke that make up the core of the Skaters' recordings, but very alien in comparison to the type of music they mimic or refer to. In essence, we are talking melting new wave songs with soulful vocals built around looping gestures of pop expression that sound like they were recorded on a Fisher Price recording console, put to tape and then left out in the sun.

The cover is a photograph of a man whose identity eludes me, but it looks to be a mug shot, which has sunglasses drawn on it in black marker, and a drawing of Slimer coming out of its forehead. On the LP, this image is tiled twelve times. The back of the LP holds the image which was originally the very large fold out poster. It depicts a collage of a nude James Ferraro standing in front of the Hollywood sign, flanked by palm trees, and with Gripers Nother Onesers Live at Slimer Beach written in black marker in the sky. The LP has an insert with song titles, as well as some additional info. It states that the recording was made for Richard Ramirez. The mug shot on the cover is not of Ramirez, however, nor is it of Cousin Mike, so I don't really know if it is related in any way. It also states that the music was recorded in June of 2004. The tape was released in an unknown quantity, the LP in a probably larger, yet unknown, quantity.

7. The Skaters – Wind Drapeing Incense/Dripping Avenues CS 2007 (New Age Cassettes)

A reissue tape on the New Age Cassettes label, as opposed to New Age Tapes, both of which was run by Ferraro (I'd actually never noticed this difference in label name with the Cassettes and Tapes epithet, and it is genuinely bewildering me now), this one starts out really cavernous and murky, with down pitched and warbly vocals and kind of barely there rhythms just out of reach to really be noticed. Rhythms and textures are like rippling water and shadows. Midway through the A side a long melodic line appears, repeating with a vocal sound from a non-human entity punctuating it. This gets cut short and is usurped by a very far away undulating keyboard melody backed by frantic drumming. That then goes into a steamy bathhouse full of relishing ghosts type scenario, with what essentially sounds like wooden thudding textures, not really even rhythms, as heard through various layers of walls and floorboards. The A side ends with a fantastic loop of a sampled soft rock choir snippet that I have been wanting to source for fifteen years now, it sounds like six seconds of the ending of a Carpenters song as performed by a Cambodian children's choir and it is a stellar moment that never fails to catch me off guard. The B side starts off with a prominent percussion element with hand drums and what sounds like the lower registers of a bamboo xylophone, with droning keyboard lines and barely-there voices at the very end of tape degradation where they start to resemble slow bell sounds, way off in the distance. Somewhere in the mid distance, slow wordless vocals bend and twist in billowing patterns. Slowly over the duration of the side, the drums retreat into vocal fog and tape hiss, and all of the distinct parts move closer unto each other, with a looping vocal part chanting along as shadowy voices in the dark laugh and holler until only a droning chord and the looping vocal chant has the last say. The music is now beyond the absolute abstract nature of the tonal elements of what the Skaters had done so far.

The cover of the tape is a degraded image of a gateway inside what appears to be a temple, in a copy-of-a-copy-of-a-copy type low contrast and stripy image, like you would see in a handout



compendium from some underfunded anthropological university 101 course. Thematically this sits in a kind of tropical islands arena and at a point where a Folkways recording would pick up electronic voice phenomena. Originally in an edition of 60 copies on Sick Head, this re-release on New Age Cassettes was made in a "limited edition". The A side is also found on the 10xLP California box on Troniks/Ground Fault/RRR.

8. The Skaters – Dispersed Royalty Ornaments LP 2007 (Wabana Ore Limited)

The second LP to be released by the Skaters, this one on Massachusetts label Wabana Ore Limited, a label that while not extraordinarily prolific, had a very wide scope of turn-of-the-century pan-experimental music.

Dispersed Royalty Ornaments follows the path that was trod since the first LP, starting off with wailing vocals, rattling gargles and hand drum rhythms so degraded by layered looping and demagnetized old tape that it sounds more like underwater ambience, coupled with hectic snake charmer runs of toy keyboard oboe and wild vocal outbursts, before being pulled down into a slower pace that simmers on top of a ton of nervous energy, with arrhythmic swells of hand drums, a weird midrange droning sound and ghostly chatter and gargle from birds, beasts and various spirits. The first track on the B-side showcases the Skaters at their most tender, with an endearing lullaby mass at sundown choral piece that is simultaneously serene and goofy in the best sense of both those words. The LP ends in a chaotic cacophony with monotonous and tape distorted hand drumming being covered in smears of wails and moans, with vocals aggressively tearing at each other with no particular place to go.

The front of the cover depicts a collage of various ceremonial and royal metal objects, crowns, scepters, metal sunshades, partially colored over in colors that have the appearance of hand knit rugs. In parts there are also hand drawn contours in black that makes

the image seem shifted in a way that mimics double vision. It is really difficult to find focus while looking. The cover is parted in a front panel and a back panel with a fold over flap at the bottom, which reveals the album title only when the front panel is pulled up. The back panel has a collage of a partial female face, covered over with a part of what I think might be Vishnu's head and various gold ornamentations. Around the dual head is a dual halo in brass and gold. The entire collage is bordered by a golden ornamental frame. The liners are found on the inside of the front panel. Edition unknown.

9. James Ferraro – Alternative Soundtrack To: Scream in Blue Surf Video CS 2007 (Pacific City)

Okay, so in 2007, seemingly out of nowhere, Ferraro drops this sucker into the deep blue on Spencer Clark's Pacific City imprint. Departing noticeably (though not entirely) from the drone-oriented smoke-and-gold type ritualistic approach that The Skaters had been honing for a while, the Alternative Soundtrack To: Scream in Blue Surf Video still feels slightly denominational, yet takes a forceful leap toward a more pop/rock type song crafting style of musical approach, stringing together improvisational yet very song-like motifs and intermissions with longer devotional synthesizer explorations.

As the title states, the recording was created as an alternative soundtrack to a 1987 surf video as presented by Australian surfer Cheyne Horan, a video so rare that it is hard to find even the least bit of information about it (though I have seen the promotional poster and found out the names of the production company and distributor, none of which has helped me find anything else about it). The cover is full color and depicts a lightly edited version of the previously mentioned promo poster for the film. The tape is divided into four acts, named after geographic locations that I presume play important parts in the Scream in Blue video, three of which have title epithets like "Wavy" and "Fluid Druid". The four tracks contain bits and pieces of fairly (, well,) structured blissful and lightheaded rock with bass, guitar, percussion, keyboards,

and the occasional falsetto vocal here and there. The huffy blissful air is retained when the tracks switch into more meditative stances with shining synth notes and chords and percussion. At certain points the meditation gets cut short by action with swirling and bouncing synth arpeggios and clattering percussion and swathes of notes building tension. Frantic as well as harmonic wordless vocals fly around the buoyancy of the arpeggiating keyboards. All of the sounds seem to emanate from the other side of a PVC membrane, which could also be the experience of distance in time. There is a lot going on in this recording, and it stands as a starting point of a lot of the music Ferraro would be committing to tape from here on out. This release is limited to an undisclosed number of copies.

10. Vodka Soap – Oceansion Island cd-r 2008 (Pacific City Sound Visions)

My copy is the 2008 cd-r reissue, but the Pacific City tape was released in 2007, so chronologically, I will place this right here. Housed in a black plastic wrap-around case with a low contrast high brightness photocopy of an image of a row of columns draped in glowing ember-like sparkles, and with a title like Oceansion Island, this recording certainly has a visual focus on higher ancient civilizations and isolated cultures, lost to time or existing elsewhere.

Pulsating rhythms permeate these two tracks, initially with a heavy focus on high pitched star light drips, like glassy specks of sound from peripheral splashes of a fountain. The rhythms go into bamboo pipe marimba territory, tightly woven with undulating outer space sonar tones beamed through shimmering water. The tracks cut off and replace each other like being channel surfed by a different listener, whose diegetic body we as secondary listeners temporarily inhabit.

Clark employs his almost trademarked bopping ceremonial rhythms as well as the skipping pause button technique that appear in most of his recorded works. The tracks have a voiceless

chanting quality to them, and they range from contemplative meditations to energetic rituals. Oceansion Island is not a particularly melodic outing, focusing more on rhythms, pulses and glassy textures that evoke both starlight and sun flares as well as the cavernous and cove like secret pockets of geography that appear in many Skaters releases, as well as within the continuity of Spencer Clark's oeuvre.

Oceansion Island was released in two limited editions, both with undisclosed number of copies.

11. Monopoly Child Star Searchers – Gitchei Manitu (12 Step Retrance Program for Troubled Dream Warriors) cd-r 2008 (Pacific City Sound Visions)

Just as with Oceansion Island, this too was released on tape in 2007 and so this will be placed here within the chronology despite being listed as a 2008 release.

For a little bit of background: Gitche Manitu means "Great Spirit" in several Algonquian languages, and it is commonly used in Native American churches. Also, Gitche Manitu is a state preserve in South Dakota which was the scene of a horrendous murder scene in 1973. This, along with the Dream Warriors allusion to the third Elm Street movie, is an example of where Clark's solo efforts enter areas of horror and dread, which they do on several occasions, most often in combination with explorations into blissful vistas and dreamlike states. The cover shows a rock formation that might be sugar loaf rock in Mackinac Island, important to Gitche Manitu lore, that radiates an eight-spoke dharma wheel like a halo against a backdrop of outer space.

A much more melodic or at least more tonal release than Oceansion Island, this one starts out with a more maniacally blissful approach, with childlike keyboard runs bouncing off insistent loops of buoyant bass tones on top of fast-running rhythms. Loo-

ping snippets of hydra headed vocals and whimsical tone clusters mingle with monotonous hand drum slapping and create a slightly demented and huffy, lightheaded geography. The recordings then go toward a mode that is more reminiscent of certain Skaters releases than the aforementioned Vodka Soap outing, though with the added flair of dramatic bamboo flute stabs, and the blissful lightness at the beginning drifts into a more focused and locked in night time exploration. Dark, bopping bamboo rhythms back up a mass like symphony of impressionistic tonal structures. Again, Clark ventures into a documentarian approach toward some undefined hidden culture in an undisclosed location, obscured by both dust and shadow.

Giitchi Manitu (12 Step Retrance Program for Troubled Dream Warriors) was initially released on tape in a limited edition, then reissued on cd-r in another limited edition.

12. Splash - Slippery Beach Trashed Gamelan cd-r 2008 (New Age Tapes)

Though I have the 2008 cd-r reissue, this was initially released on tape in 2007, so it will live here in the chronology.

Released on Ferraro's own New Age Tapes, this one-off moniker claims to be gamelan-centric, with a collaged bonang sitting on a beach on the cover, with a dripping "Splash" written above it in whiteout. It is unclear if the moniker Splash is just about water and ocean activities, or if it is also an allusion to the Tom Hanks/Darryl Hannah mermaid romcom (both possibilities are plausible, all things considered).

Sure, there are clanging bell sounds and gamelan runs drizzled throughout this recording, but traditional gamelan it ain't. What it is is really catchy, with a distorted melodic and waving Casio sound that jetskis around the clanging bells, polyrhythmic micromelodies and little clusters of keyboard notes and wavy high pitch tones criss and cross all over, interspersed with goofy little

cartoony sounds, in a scenario that appears to happen behind a thick sheet of clear PVC. The air is salty, and we are clearly disassociating in a hazy out-of-body type way. There are many details hidden within Slippery Beach Trashed Gamelan that are a foreshadowing of the trajectory of Ferraro's musical journey, in fact the last track sits entirely within the boundaries of the contemporaneous Ferraro project Lamborghini Crystal.

This is by every definition a genuinely tasty outing that should not be overlooked. Beaches and water, this was originally released in a limited edition on tape and then reissued in a limited edition on cd-r.

13. Lamborghini Crystal - Little Deuce Coupe TV Dinners CS 2007 (New Age Tapes)

Alright, so another collection of disfigured demon pop tunes from Ferraro and J.C. Peavey, this one claims to have "Bram Stokers" on saxophone. This tape immediately sets a much spookier vibe than the 2006 Cool Runnings 1992 tape, with haunted house background noises and cheap Fuge in D Minor organ sounds, ghosts singing and bass lines lifted from the Munsters and Addams Family soundtrack reels. Every once in a while, a groovy 60's rock n roll snippet appears only to be chased away by the frantic cartoon ghost main cast. There is a lot of 60's dance party cuts going on on this tape. The vocals at times sound like they are being sung from the inside of a helium balloon, and the instrumental sounds are often very distorted and blown out. Within an echoing concrete tunnel, an energetic cover of Donna Summers' Hot Stuff echoes into a harshly distorted mess while inhuman high-pitched vocals make contributions every here and there.

The cover depicts a deformed humanoid shape with a contorted face wearing large 80s sunglasses and a blue asylum style bed gown, in front of a gothic revival house and some ghoulish trees under a full moon. Little Deuce Coupe TV Dinners was released on tape, only once, in an unknown quantity.

14. Lamborghini Crystal - Dial: 747-Creepozoid CS 2007 (New Age Tapes)

The second most sought after Lamborghini Crystal release, just after the Cool Runnings 1992 tape, this one was also released on Ferraro's own New Age Tapes, though unlike Cool Runnings 1992, Dial: 747-Creepozoid was never reissued.

This tape, to me, holds some of the most memorable Lamborghini Crystal cuts. The overall feel of the music is slightly detached, with synthetic saxophone sounds that could have been also used in a demonstration video for a mid-80s beachside resort or a designer vase manufacturer. Otherworldly and demonic voices trade places in hijacking the music, bending it to their will and morphing it into shapes that snap back into its original form, only to again and again get pushed and squeezed into new shapes. Multiple layers of sounds and visuals all with varying opacity fade in and out on top of each other, as catchy and distorted Casio riffs and guitar leads twist and weave into each other. Most of the melodic work on Dial 747 is handled by an ambitious bass guitar, that seems lifted from a studio band that provided the world with incidental music for nighttime police shows of yore. Shimmering and dripping new age synth pads drift in and out only to be overtaken by whoops and wails from a variety of demons, ghosts and underwater soul singers. The throwback cover of this release is a take on the Champs' classic tune 'Tequila'.

The tape cover depicts a sunglassed Ferraro next to a cartoony grinning humanoid, also wearing sunglasses (a rare sighting of J.C. Peavey, perhaps), in front of a non-descript background. On the right, there is the word "BLOB", which has been sourced from the 1988 version of the movie The Blob cinematic poster. This release was limited to an undisclosed number of copies.

15. Lamborghini Crystal - Roach Motel cd-r 2007 (New Age Tapes)

Alright, so this one is a doozy. Released later than the Lamborghini Crystal recordings mentioned above, this one has the feel of what happens at the tail end of a specific idea, when a fair amount of ground already has been covered.

This cd-r starts off with a warped sample from the first Beavis and Butthead short "Frog Baseball", and then confidently leaps into a complete mess of Elvis impersonation, the Barracuda main riff, Sunset Strip sleaze and multi-layered everything-at-once studies in AM-band quantum entanglement. Demoniac winds blow through hair metal shredding, church bells and frantic organ sounds open up a kind of desolate post-something soundscape that ends up in the innermost circle of hell. To cap it off, the end credits roll to a New Jack Swing style instrumental embellished with dog barks. I mean, it's funny, and it has its moments, but Roach Motel is not mandatory listening.

The cover is just a xeroxed version of the Dial 747: Creepozoid cover with Roach Motel written on it in black marker, although several different covers are in circulation. One has a high-rise skyline with a pair of pink lips drawn on in highlighter, and it is unknown how many copies were made.

16. Pacific Rat Temple Band Wave Rave Pt 1 - Skelesand Extra-Earth Morph cd-r 2008 (New Age Tapes)

Pacific Rat Temple Band was a short-lived Ferraro moniker, that at times might have been a band; Discogs lists members as being James Ferraro, Chippi, Tan Sailor, R.B. Ocean Beach and Charles Berlitz, the latter which is a kind of avatar for certain activities related to Spencer Clark. The others are enigmas and will probably stay that way. If I am not mistaken, Pacific Rat Temple Band toured the United States as a duo consisting of Ferraro and La-

banna Bly.

Musically, Wave Rave Pt 1 – Skelesand Extra-Earth Morph is in a much more calm and devotional mode than most of Ferraro's previous work, with some falsetto vocal styles reminiscent of the Skaters material, but here in a more melodic type of expression. This is accompanied by, or rather this accompanies a pulsating monotone, half-warped and slightly distorted synth shimmer, which is backed by slow and distinct hand drums that on occasion are broken up by the sound of a gong. It's a one track type deal, which contains five distinct sub-parts. It's kind of a 50/50 mix of 90's mid-budget scifi series and ceremonial wordless hymn. The last part takes a bit of a turn with a slightly paranoid bent, drum machine rhythms and swirling synthesizer vortexes that upends the mind at ease that preceded it.

The cover is slightly off-character for Ferraro (or Skaters-related releases) but also one of my favorites in all its minimalist glory. It looks like the 30th generation copy of the title page of a report or compendium of some sort, written not too long ago, but still, you know – long ago. Get it? Are you up on this? Just kidding. Anyway, this was released in an unknown edition. Most of the New Age Tapes cd-rs were never officially limited, and would or could be made in additional copies if ordered directly from Ferraro himself. If this ever was true in practice, no one will be able to say for sure.

17. Monopoly Child Star Searchers - Infant Spirituality Rates Coconut Percent cd-r 2008 (Pacific City Studios)

This is the only Monopoly Child Star Searchers released on Spencer Clark's Pacific City Studios imprint, which ran alongside Pacific City Sound Visions, both of which are subdivisions of the more prolific Pacific City label. Apart from these three, there is also the fourth variation Pacific City Discs, but that's another story. What distinguishes Pacific City Studios releases from Pacific City Sound Visions and Pacific City is probably not even up for debate,

there is no clear distinction, and I am content in thinking that the choice of imprint name was spur of the moment and what was at the top of Clark's mind at the time of each release.

I am also having a bit of trouble in clearly delineating what distinguishes Monopoly Child Star Searchers from Vodka Soap and Black Joker, which is a moniker that we will get to eventually. Vodka Soap tends to be a bit more minimalist and droning, but still has rhythmic elements, but if anything, Monopoly Child Star Searchers or the colloquial Monopoly Child, has a heavier focus on rhythms and percussion and tends to be more energetic, although not necessarily all the time. Also: what the fuck is a vodka soap? Anyway, back to this:

Infant Spirituality Rates Coconut Percent was released both as a tape and a cd-r, I have the cd-r version, which comes in a black slimcase with a wrap-around cover image in glorious brighted-out xerox depicting a temple staircase situation, kind of ascend-to-the-pinnacle under the aligned planets in a peak prophecy type scenario. The sound is dark and murky and night timed and the bouncing and buoyant rhythmic patterns and cacophonous choirs of flutes that we know from earlier Monopoly Child releases are cut up into little snippets, with their creator zapping between them. Some snippets are very different from each other, and some more in a flavor variant of their twins. This quilt-like effect of short loops of sound paint static mini-images and take on the function and overall aesthetic of a stand full of sun bleached post-cards, depicting faded thumbnail photographs of sights worth seeing, compacted into a memory that never was your own. It's right there in front of you, yet never truly tangible, framed and faded, a truly ephemeral utterance.

Infant Spirituality Rates Coconut Percent was released in a quantity of 80 cd-rs and a cassette edition of unknown quantity.

18. James Ferraro – Last American Hero/ Adrenaline's End CS 2008 (Taped sounds)

This tape was released on Lieven Martens' (aka Dolphins Into The Future) Belgian Taped Sounds label, and then later reissued in an edited version on LP on Olde English Spelling Bee. The tape cover has a color photograph of two adult men dressed in what could only be described as edgy toddler chic 2000's clothing, posing with two black motorcycles against a desert backdrop at dusk, with a large Cereus cactus towering above them. The inside of the J-card has a photo of two people doing tandem skydiving over what appears to be a part of the Florida coastline. The LP version simply has a photograph of a Best Buy on the front with a small thumbnail screencap of the Judge Judy logo in one corner, while the back of the cover is a collaged scenario containing the tail of a Dodge SXT pickup truck with a Best Buy in the far background. There is also a small mech warrior and the FOX Sports logo present. The center label has a collage of the Monster Energy logo superimposed on a desert mountain range landscape background, crowned with a cut out photo of a pierced tongue. I have the tape version, so the rest of this is about that version. Thematically, this is Ferraro's first really focused foray into the post-9/11 zeitgeist and the iconography of the contemporary capitalist ideals of the United States.

The first side of the tape is divided into four pieces that are cut together, and it is an unusually sparse affair where a synthesized version the twangy electric guitar originally heard on Boiling the Animal in the Sky is front and center, moving slowly across ominous backing chords, swelling pads, slowly pumping bass lines and a slightly stumbling drumbeat. The first part is a very moody affair, and very cinematic. Both the second and third part is equally cinematic, and have an airy ambivalence about them that also suggests the silent vastness of the desert landscape that is depicted on the cover. The fourth part is a sort of bookend that combines the overall air of the latter two parts with the twangy guitar sounds of the first one. The entire side is a tense contemplative and uneasy composition that revels in implicit darkness. The second side is a more energetic sequence in three parts, with joyful-

ly bouncy backing by drum machine and bass, and looping synth leads that overlap and shift the rhythmic perspective throughout. The pieces mainly loop, but they also develop over time with added instrumentation. The whole tape reads like a study in a variety of developments in the 00's era of the US and the world at large, corporate branding, religious consumer culture, toxic individualism in the post-90's reimagining of 'radical' aesthetics, and so forth.

The tape was released in an unknown edition and the LP was limited to 450 copies.

19. James Ferraro - Multitopia LP 2008 (Olde English Spelling Bee)

Originally released on cd-r by Ferraro's own New Age Tapes and then later reissued the same year on LP by Olde English Spelling Bee, *Multitopia* is a very mentally chaotic record. It appears to be wearing all of its masks simultaneously, playing all of its versions of itself at the same time, constantly refracting one idea into the next.

Blissful synthesizer parts clash with rock-type rhythms, snippets of daytime news shows interweave with clanging gong type metal objects, manic hand drums seem to battle dissonant organ/metal team ups. It's all very frantic and fractured to the edge of coherence. The melodic parts are the ones that's the most polyrhythmic and everything is steeped in tape distortion, compression and saturation, yet in all this cacophony, it is a very musical outing, once your brain catches up. Perhaps the most musically free form of any of Ferraro's recordings, it's a great listen if you for whatever reason feel way too calm.

The album cover is a collage of a humanoid robot/constructed human with a computer screen for a face, wearing denim jeans and biker jacket with cut off denim vest in front of some kind of oil refinery that appears to be on fire. The back cover depicts a

sunglassed James Ferraro wearing fake breasts and a floral print skirt, leaning against an Area 51 arcade game, with a continuation of the burning oil refinery as backdrop.

The cd-r was limited to 50 copies, and the LP was made into 425 copies.

20. James Ferraro - Virtual Erase cd-r 2008 (New Age Tapes)

This is a Europe-only release on Ferraro's own New Age Tapes, a long one track ordeal of over 80 minutes. The cover is a really blown out, brighted and grainy xerox/laser jet image of a smiling Ferraro in front of the T2: Judgement Day logo that just has "Virtual Erase" jotted at the top in pencil. The track thrashes and throws itself around with abandon, jerking from apocalyptic machines-go-haywire to maniacal psychosis Casio rock jams and little goofy cartoon noises with melting motherboard/world BIOS malfunctions. Overall, it's a kind of dark and frantic recording, tinny and muffled in parts, like the sound equivalent of filming a CRT screen, or a moment within parentheses if that analogy makes any sense to you. There are a lot of fragments of ideas and motifs from other Ferraro recordings, but sort of jumbled together and disintegrating in real time, floating about in a churning maelstrom of droning background noise. If the Lamborghini Crystal recordings were a joyous (and sometimes simultaneously nightmarish) celebration of a kind of nostalgic headspace, Virtual Erase takes a lot of the same components but transposes them into a much more ominous and disjointed area. In places the songs coalesce into something coherent, but it only takes moments until they break apart. As a totality, it is a bit unfocused and in parts it has the feel of being thrown together just to be another release, but when it shines, the energetic dystopian geography that it projects makes up for its flaws. With a bit of editing, Virtual Erase could have been a lot more worthwhile, and while it is not at all without merit, it is one of the less tantalizing outings by Ferraro.

Virtual Erase was released in an edition of 50 euro-exclusive copies.

21. Liquid Metal - Alternative Soundtrack To: Digital Overdrive cd-r 2008 (New Age Tapes)

Despite being released under the one-off moniker of Liquid Metal, this disc is presented in the same way as the Alternative Soundtrack To: Scream In Blue Surf Video, meaning that it is supposed to be an alternative soundtrack to some kind of video or movie. However, this time the movie that it claims to soundtrack most probably does not exist, making it a kind of double folded hypothetical, a potential soundtrack to a potential movie. The cover is a still of some kind of cyborg face that is torn to shreds with the logo of Richard Pepin's 1995 Universal Soldier/Terminator/Robocop inspired straight-to-video flick Cyber-Tracker 2. The back cover is a collage of a couple of microchips on a circuit board and "Liquid Metal" written in black marker, with the same shredded cyborg face as on the front.

Musically, Liquid Metal works like a bridge between rock hook-y jamminess of Lamborghini Crystal and the broken technology/dystopia of Multitopia and Virtual Erase, as remodeled into some sort of sci fi vehicle. Rhythmic, mechanical and insistingly repetitive, with the kind of goofy-yet-terrifying radiance of out of control machinery, Alternative Soundtrack to: Digital Overdrive achieves what it sets out to do: be a soundtrack to something that holds your attention. In this instance, the movie has to be constructed in your mind, so if you go all in and actually build that narrative for yourself, this whole thing works, but it needs that effort to fully complete itself. All in all, it's alright for ambience, but for focused listening it is not all that exciting (unless you add the sci fi action as a side order).

Alternative Soundtrack to: Digital Overdrive was released in an unknown edition.

22. K2 - Chameleon Ballet cd-r 2008 (New Age Tapes)

Confusingly named the same as a well-known Japanese noise artist, I do not know if this James Ferraro-held name is in reference to the mountain, the 1991 movie about scaling the mountain, or the synonym for the drug Spice, or something altogether different, but I do not think there is any implied reference to Kusafuka Kimihide.

Chameleon Ballet is a jittery and slightly uneasy exercise in synthesizer musical architecture. Dark and energetically contemplative, like lucid REM sleep, its soundscaping partially relative to late 70s Klaus Schulze, as well as the film Liquid Sky, both in sound and aesthetic. Dark, restless, constructed from very cheap parts, cold and industrial, yet with an unspoken pop sensibility in all its cacophonous and dissonant glory, Chameleon Ballet to me evokes images of wide open eyeballs rapidly panning in all directions, circuit boards, dark stairwells and post-futurist baroque fashion shows in secret night clubs.

The cd-r comes in a black slimline case with a collage of two androgynous and mannequin-like humanoids, dressed as fashionable Pierrot characters, white faces with dark lips, no hair and with sunglasses drawn on in black marker. The case contains a small slip of paper that says "K2 Chameleon Ballet, recorded by James Ferraro for Media Disc Summer '08". There is no text on the cover.

Chameleon Ballet was released on cd-r and cassette by New Age Tapes in an unknown edition, and on LP by Olde English Spelling Bee in an edition of 425.

23. K2 - Encinoman: Cryogenic Awakening cd-r 2008 (New Age Tapes)

Encinoman: Cryogenic Awakening was released simultaneously as Chameleon Ballet, yet the similarities to its sibling are not that

prominent. Retaining some of the jitteriness, the overall feel of this recording is not nearly as dark and cold, instead it leans into a swirling and fizzy, warping and whimsical mechanical space that feels like the accompaniment to a Mega Man boss battle, rather than a clandestine fashion show in a neon dystopia. I mean, the implication of the title alone absolutely underlines this, as it references the 1992 comedy Encino Man, starring Pauly Shore and Brendan Fraser, in which a caveman encased in a block of ice is defrosted in a 90s California suburb, proceeds to go to high school and becomes popular.

Some of the tracks on this disc also has some resemblance to the Alternative Soundtrack to: Scream In Blue Surf Video as well, and there is a track that uses the 90210 riff and elaborates on it in a way that is reminiscent of the Lamborghini Crystal idea. While not as cohesive nor iconic as the Chameleon Ballet release, Encinoman: Cryogenic Awakening has moments where the tracks stand out. If I had to choose only one K2 release of these two though, it would be the former. The disc comes in a black slimline case with a collage of various details from the movie Encino Man, as well as from the movie poster, with the word "opiate" written along its sides.

Encinoman: Cryogenic Awakening was released in two unknown but limited editions.

24. James Ferraro - Marble Surf cd-r 2008 (New Age Tapes)

Marble Surf is a bit of a sidestep in tone and theme for Ferraro, who at this point had drifted into a fairly dark and moody area. This release coincided with, I think, Ferraro living in Antwerp where a very strong new age musical influence emanated from the likes of Lieven Martens and his Radio Centraal radio show De Ocean de Geluid, and while this is not necessarily the reason for this recording's existence, it is hard not to connect those dots. Consisting of two longer pieces of music based around synthesizer timpani and sampled low resolution choral sounds played

melodically, the Marble Surf pieces present themselves as kinda homebrew double speed Storms in Africa/Private Music Renaissance pieces, very florally romantic, sentimental yet ecstatic and triumphant as well as floaty musical score for a fading memory of a place that evokes images of paradisiacal antiquity, something like pop hymns of the Elysian fields.

The first time I put this disc in the player, I had just had people stay at my place, and there was a halfway deflated air mattress on the floor in front of the stereo, and as this started streaming out of my speakers, I lay down on this air mattress, with just enough air to keep me floating an inch off the floor, and I listened to the whole thing without getting up and it was one of the most serene moments of listening to music that I have ever had.

The cover is a bit hard to make out, but it appears to be a collage of a painting of a woman, set to a sparse background where the top of a Doric column is visible, and the whole image is in high contrast and very high brightness. My copy has an alternate cover that is simply a black and white print of a part of Titian's renaissance painting Bacchus and Ariadne. It's literally just printed and cut out, no artist name or title, no liner notes. It's such a gloriously indolent record cover, and it really suits the music.

Marble Surf was released on cd-r in a Europe-only edition limited to 50 copies.

25. Monopoly Child Star Searchers - Prince Of Parrot Shooters cd-r 2008 (Pacific City)

This little modest cd-r was self-released by Spencer Clark on Pacific City and on tape by Pacific City Sound Visions (see how hard it is to find the logic of the label names here? Do you understand how HARD this is?) and later, it was paired with the 2009 Monopoly Child release "Aqueducts of Channel Island" and reissued as an LP by Pacific City Discs. That reissue makes a lot of sense, as Prince of Parrot Shooters unfolds like a real magnum opus for

Monopoly Child Star Searchers. Listening to it, it really hits hard how focused and varied and in the zone this recording is.

A lot of elements are classic Clark fare, but there are also some real signature moves that are noticeably absent, the most obvious one being the buoyant bouncing rhythms that are almost ubiquitous on other Monopoly Child recordings. There are ritual/ceremonial percussion aplenty on Prince of Parrot Shooters, but they refrain from the commonly executed bounciness, and while I really tend to love that buoyancy, the absence might be what makes this cd-r feel like it stands out a little. There is a lot of airy chanting organ/flute chord cluster sounds on this one, as well as the recurring light beam/glassy fountain droplets sound, and a lot of the pause button zap mixing that is perhaps the most signature move that appears in Clark's canon. Harmonic harmonium drones accompany melodic flute lines, clanging wind chimes clash against wobbly serpentine melodies of unknown origin. There is a new feature going on as well, with a very controlled use of pitch bent notes, the sound of a synthesizer bending downwards, that will become a very classic Clark-move from here on out. The fidelity is fairly high for a Clark release of this era, and it paints a kind of tropical exploration and journey-like sense of wonder type scenario.

The cover depicts a radiant celestial parrot head above multiple palm trees, with two Egyptian columns in the foreground. The back holds a piece of text attributed to Charles Berlitz and the possible publication Fourth World Magazine as liner notes.

Prince of Parrot Shooters was initially released in a Europe-only cassette in an edition of 80 copies, and later reissued as a cd-r in an unknown quantity.



1



2



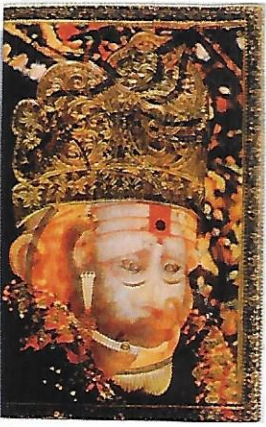
3



4

1

1. The Wooden Cupboard - Boiling the Animal in the Sky
2. The Skaters - Dark Rye Bread
3. The Skaters - Pavillionous Miracles of Circular Facet Dice
4. The Skaters - Gambling in Ohpa's Shadow



5



6



7



8

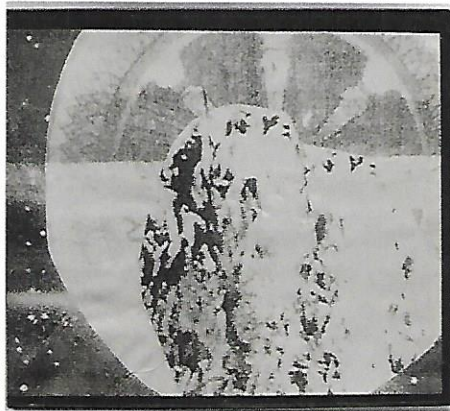
- 5. *The Skaters - Crowned Purple Gowns*
- 6. *Grippers Nother Onesers - Live at Slimer Beach*
- 7. *The Skaters - Wind Drapeing Incense/Dripping Avenues*
- 8. *The Skaters - Dispersed Royalty Ornaments*



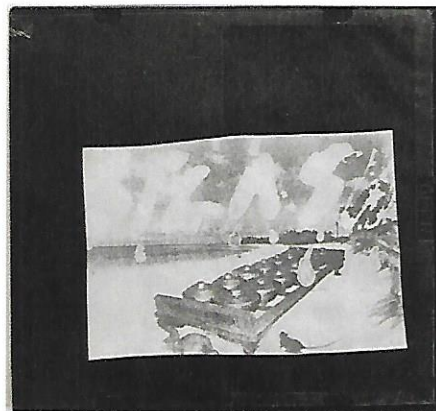
9



10



11



12

9. James Ferraro - *Alternative Soundtrack to: Scream in Blue Surf Video*

10. Vodka Soap - *Oceansion Island*

11. Monopoly Child Star Searchers - *Gitchii Manitu (12 Step Retrance Program for Troubled Dream Warriors)*

12. Splash - *Slippery Beach Trashed Gamelan*



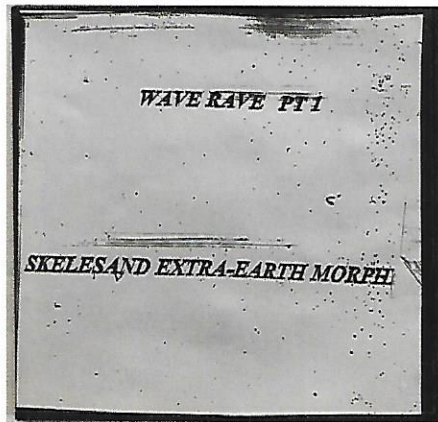
13



14



15

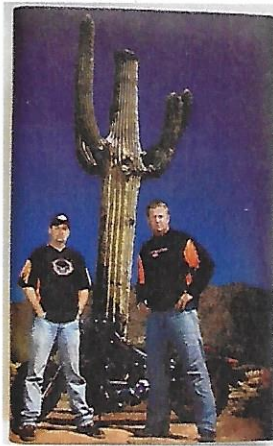


16

- 13. Lamborghini Crystal - Little Deuce Coupe TV Dinners
- 14. Lamborghini Crystal - Dial: 747-Creepozoid
- 15. Lamborghini Crystal - Roach Motel
- 16. Pacific Rat Temple Band Wave Rave Pt 1 - Skelesand Extra-Earth Morph



17



18



19



20

17. Monopoly Child Star Searchers - Infant Spirituality Rates
Coconut Percent

18. James Ferraro - Last American Hero/Adrenaline's End

19. James Ferraro - Multitopia

20. James Ferraro - Virtual Erase



21



22



23



24

21. *Liquid Metal - Alternative Soundtrack To: Digital Overdrive*

22. *K2 - Chameleon Ballet*

23. *K2 - Encinoman: Cryogenic Awakening*

24. *James Ferraro - Marble Surf*



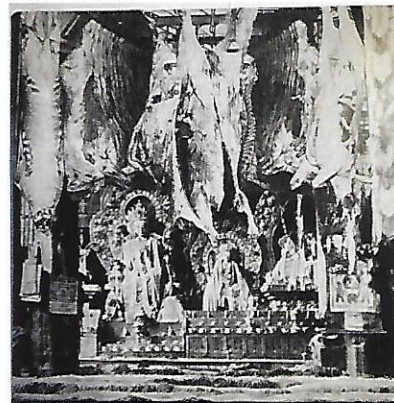
25



26



27



28

25. Monopoly Child Star Searchers - Prince of Parrot Shooters
 26. Black Joker - Watch Out!
 27. Vodka Soap - Shee-Ro Gateway Temples
 28. The Skaters - Physicalities Of The Sensibilites of Ingrediential Strairways



29



30

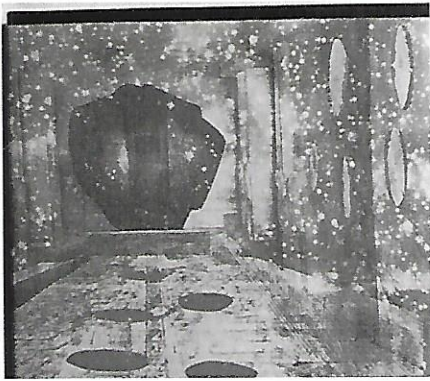


31

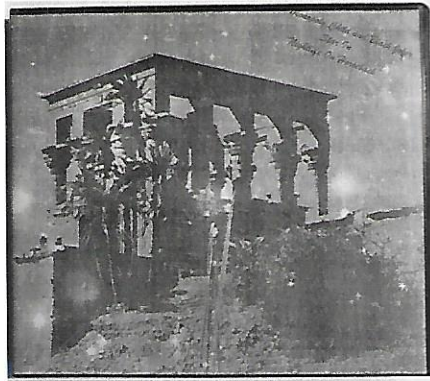


32

29. James Ferraro - Star Digital Theatre Movies For P.T. Cruisers
 30. Edward Flex Presents: Do you believe in Hawaii?
 21. James Ferraro - Heaven's Gate
 32. Monopoly Child's Nightlife Band - Presents: The Aqueducts of Channel Island



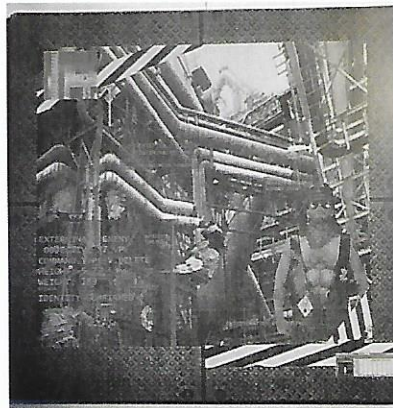
33



34



35



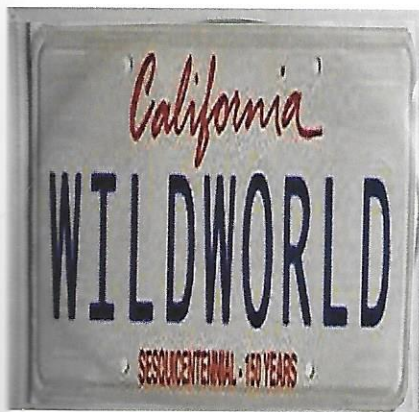
36

33. *Vodka Soap - Interpretation: The Initiation*

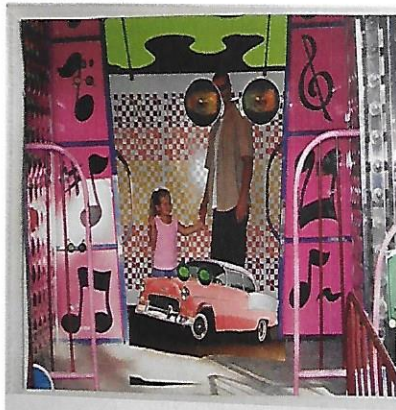
34. *Monopoly Child & Black Joker - Star In "Nightlife On Horseback"*

35. *James Ferraro - Jarvid 9: Gecko*

36. *James Ferraro - Citrac*



37



38



39

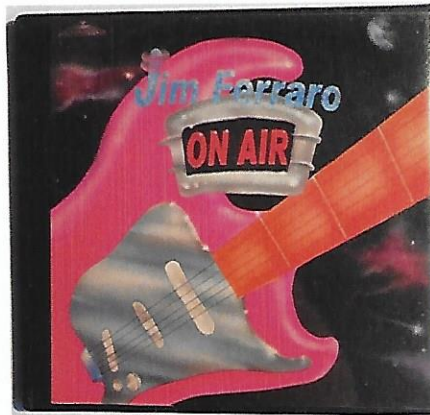


40

- 37. James Ferraro - Wild World
- 38. James Ferraro - Son of Dracula
- 39. James Ferraro - iAsia
- 40. James Ferraro - Rapture Adrenaline



41



42



43

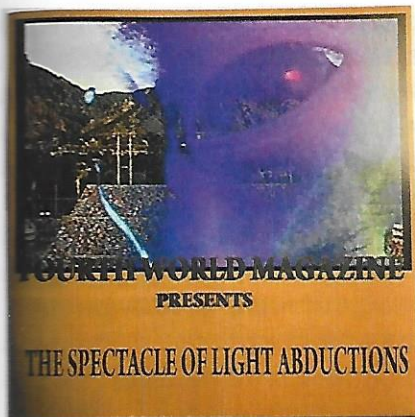


44

41. Monopoly Child Star Searchers - Bamboo For Two
 42. James Ferraro - On Air (all signs point to this being the back of the cover, but I have decided otherwise)
 43. James Ferraro - Feed Me
 44. James Ferraro - Pixarni



45



46



47

45. James Ferraro - Night Dolls With Hairspray

46. Fourth World Magazine Presents: The Spectacle of Light Abductions

47. Monopoly Child Star Searchers - Make Mine, Macaw

26. *Black Joker – Watch Out! LP 2009 (Olde English Spelling Bee)*

The original cassette release of this was released in 2008 on Clark's own Pacific City Sound Visions, and then rereleased on the same label on cd-r in 2009, and then finally also made into an LP by Olde English Spelling Bee in 2009 as well, and while this is the version I own, the release is placed right here in the chronology because of its original cassette release date.

A third moniker for Spencer Clark, to be confused with Monopoly Child Star Searchers and Vodka Soap. He has a few others but at this point in time (around 2008) the main three are the ones I just mentioned. While Ferraro's different projects aren't completely distinct from each other, they tend to take winding paths that, while still crossing and intertwining, go in slightly more individual directions, while Clark use with the same tool set and palette to arrange his works in ways that distinguish themselves from each other in more abstract ways, less thematically different, and more different in ways like pulse, texture and density. For instance, where Monopoly Child tend to rely a lot on percussion that sounds like bamboo marimbas and Vodka Soap has a tendency to go toward slower percussion and more in the style of hand drums, this here Black Joker recording has percussion that sounds like wooden blocks, and where there tends to be a lot of overlapping melodic elements, that would often consist of more flute oriented sounds on Monopoly Child recordings and more glassy, dripping sounds in Vodka Soap, here they instead have a lot of different twinkly amorphous and bell-like sounds.

There is a large focus on long droning sounds and insistent and focused wooden rhythms, all covered in twinkling embellishments, all moving the tracks into trance like states. Lots of small sounds that tend toward cacophony, but just precisely stay on the harmonic side and build into rambunctiously semi-coherent gravitational pulls. The record cover consists of a black and white xerox photographic art piece of a camel being pulled by a very large parrot, in front of some kind of pyramidal structure, which projects a beam of light or energy (both?) from its apex up toward

heaven. There are also a couple of palm trees, and an overlay of outer space or twinkling stars. The back holds a piece of text written by Charles Berlitz in 2027, and a business card from Pacific City Sound Visions that has the tagline "A Coconut To The Stars" written on it.

Watch Out! was released in an initial run of 80 Europe-only cassettes, then in a limited edition on cd-r, and then finally on LP, which was released in an unknown number of copies.

27. Vodka Soap - Shee-Ro Gateway Temples cd-r 2008 (Pacific City)

Okay, so at this point the difference between Monopoly Child and Vodka Soap is really starting to crystallize – Monopoly Child is clearly more energetic and rhythm based, while Vodka Soap is more contemplative and centered around trance like states. Shee-Ro Gateway Temples, initially a cassette released on Pacific City, and then reissued as a cd-r the same year, also on Pacific City, is a stellar entry into the Vodka Soap catalog.

Decidedly nocturnal in nature, with dark and droning flute lines, shimmering and twinkling bells and barely-there looped vocals. The percussive elements present, when they are present, are slow and meditative, and often sound more like drums than bamboo marimbas (which is normally what occurs on Monopoly Child releases). There are pastoral airy organ passages interspersed with clanging gongs, a lot of glassy dripping textures and shimmering pulses of musical expression from unknown sources. Occasionally, some purely percussive interludes appear. A lot of the little pieces within the two tracks on this disc has a feel of automatic writing to them, and when they don't, they feel like documentation of participatory events, field recordings of clandestine celebrations, and sometimes the two variants overlap and find symbiosis within their coexistence.

The cover consists of a dark collage of what looks like a Cam-

bodian temple against a starry night sky, with the silhouette of a coconut tree in the foreground. On the back, we get presented with a bit of text attributed to Charles Berlitz. It also states that the recording was made in 2028, 20 years into the future from whence it was released.

Both editions were released in unknown limited quantities.

28. Skaters - Physicalities Of The Sensibilites Of Ingrediential Strairways LP 2008 (Eclipse Records)

With the exception for a very short live recording that appears on a split tape with the Belgian project Instant Space Supe, this LP is the most recent or perhaps the last collaborative effort by Ferraro and Clark under the Skaters name, and it really plays as the culmination of everything that was explored by the Skaters as a band or bond, even. It is quite striking how very specific the Skaters' sound was, and how honed it had become at this point. While you can read a lot of what makes up the different parts of the Skaters' musical palette by listening to the solo projects of Ferraro and Clark, there is not an ounce of influence of their respective solo efforts that revert back into the Skaters amalgamation.

Physicalities of the Sensibilites of Ingrediential Strairways offer a full-on smoke bath in dark caverns, haunting yet mesmerizing chants and incantations, the shadows of pounding drums, dancing silhouettes of apparitions, flickering lights from ceremonial fires and an immensely immersive gravitational pull. Even though it is very evident that the Skaters consist of two people, the sounds on this recording seem to emanate from a lot of individuals, like looking through a kaleidoscope in a hall of mirrors. Hand drums, drums hit with mallets, low-resolution synth lines, flutes, multilayered voices, chants and ululations, little techniques of using microphonic feedback and acoustic distortions, delivered through devotional mantra-like expressions that build and wane, within close proximity and at far distance. A lot of the foundations of these tracks are based around loops of varying lengths, but

the layering of these loops, as well as the differing lengths and the depth of the mix, very much distracts from this fact. Sometimes very short loops are put front and center, which makes them noticeable, but in a way where they function like mantras around which the rest of the activities center themselves, like points of gravity that pulls everything else into a vortex around them.

The cover image on the sleeve is a black and white collage of what I believe to be statues the three Buddhas at some temple or monastery, with rows of hanging animal carcasses from a slaughterhouse above them. There is no text on the front, and the back is all white with liner notes in all caps italic Arial lettering centered in the middle. The record is actually not even attributed to the Skaters anywhere on the cover, the centrum labels of the LP are all black. The only textual indication that this is a record by the Skaters is the names James Ferraro and Spencer Clark mentioned on the back. The Eclipse Records catalog states that this is a Skaters release, and there is no ambiguity that this is the case, but it does not say that it is anywhere on the record or sleeve.

While I think that I still hold Dripping Avenues / Wind Drapeing Incense tape slightly closer to my heart, the Physicalities LP is the quintessential Skaters release, that at the time of writing this is easy to track down and is still affordable. There is no reason not to seek this out if you are at all interested in unconventional music or even just any type of unbound expression.

Physicalities of the Sensibilites of Ingrediential Strairways was released in a one-time limited pressing in an unknown quantity.

29. James Ferraro - Star Digital Theatre Movies For P.T. Cruisers cd-r 2009 (New Age Tapes)

The liners say "recorded in 2008", but it was released in early 2009, and that will make me place it here, as it is kind of impossible to know recording date of the releases that do not specify time of recording (and especially since a lot of the Spencer Clark

material is being beamed from the future). *Star Digital Theatre: Movies for P.T. Cruisers* is a hell of a layered implication of a title, presenting movies made for P.T. Cruisers, the universally vilified 2000s Chrysler compact car, which kind of means that the audience are either cars that are owned by, or just as placeholder for, the demographic of that car model. As far as I can tell, that would be a target market that would fit into the same framework that the *Last American Hero* release seemed to talk about. So we are in a kind of cinematic dream world fantasy, in the late 00s North American sociopolitical context.

Star Digital Theatre has two half hour long tracks, both presented as the soundtrack to a specific movie. This places it in the extended line of the earlier Ferraro releases *Alternative Soundtrack To: Scream In Blue Surf Video* and *Alternative Soundtrack To: Digital Overdrive*, but at this stage, the *Alternative Soundtrack To:* is dropped in favor of real soundtracks for unreal movies, both which seem to be manifestations of two of Ferraro's areas of interest. The first movie is called "Baby Dreams Inc. (Mr. Star Tower in Babytown)" which is presented in a kind of corporate starry-eyed dys/utopian way. It is being scored with music that initially sounds like what happens if you would force feed the original *Sonic the Hedgehog* soundtrack through the Ferraro *Marble Surf* cd-r. It's a frenetically euphoric head rush sound, that gradually shifts over into an extended mantra of hand drums and monotone keyboard tonal rhythms, that partially references certain *Skaters* modes, sans vocals. The second movie is called *Midnight Pacific Fantasy Presents: Pinball Drive*, and the narration for this one is in more of a sci-fi adrenaline arcade game reality kinda area. Jovial keyboard melodies try to make their way through a cacophony of clanging noises and other choppy distractions, whimsical and violent at the same time.

The cd-r comes in a plastic sleeve with black and white artwork. A collaged image of a cinema entrance, with the title written on the letter board, with searchlights pointed toward the sky, set against a backdrop of what I'm guessing to be Los Angeles city lights, and a projected beam of energy emanating skyward from a hill in the far distance. The back cover is a collage of a movie theatre showing an alternate version of the 1994 Jim Carrey movie *The*

Mask that

This cd-r

30. *Edwe Hawaii?*

The second
ject is satir
ny and re
opened as
cd-r on th
of four
of two re
backpack
ward P

Insight
for best
seats are
are not
moved
that all
don't
trunk
over the
the
though
people
could
reality
lower
lower

Mask that appears to have babies as a prominent feature.

This cd-r was released in a limited edition.

30. Edward Flex Presents: Do you believe in Hawaii? cd-r 2009 (New Age Tapes)

The second Edward Flex album to be released, this Ferraro project is super specific to what it is, music created to both accompany and represent Edward Flex, a monstrous gym leader has just opened a studio in Hawaii and he is inviting us in. Released on cd-r on Ferraro's own New Age Tapes, the hour-long disc consists of four tracks which come in a clear plastic sleeve with a collage of two massively muscled bodybuilders inside a gym, against a background of anti-slip steel. The back has a greeting from Edward Flex himself.

Inspirational and relaxational new wave/new age crossover music for barely human bodybuilders, accompanied by lots of seagulls, seals and clanging gym machines. Prominent parts of a few tracks are rock guitar-centric, with a real video game/extreme sports movie incidental music sound to it. Grunting mutant bodybuilders that sound like Quake monsters trade off with excited inspirational commentary over distorted PA-systems, while gorgeous triumphant Vangelis-styled synthesizer outbursts float heavily over implied outdoor gyms. Occasionally, the grunting stops and the keyboard lines and synth pads soar freely, and all of a sudden things turn serene and deeply relaxational, with only some clanging bells/gym equipment and the odd animal noise. Fast-paced cool down, meditations on seclusion in paradise and throbbing muscle fibers, sand on steel and volcanic rocks, which get sidelined by surges of high intensity workouts. I mean, it's kind of a unique thematic and musical vision that is framed really well. Do I believe in Hawaii? Yes, I fucking do. This is mandatory listening.

Unknown and probably limited edition.

31. James Ferraro - Heaven's Gate cd-r 2009 (New Age Tapes)

One more 2009 cd-r from Ferraro's own New Age Tapes. The cd-r comes in a plastic sleeve with a collage of some ornamented gates that open a gateway in a background of clouds that lead into outer space (which I guess is a representation of cosmos or the beyond), with a staircase leading up to it. The back has a collage of a pregnant belly that seem to contain a galaxy, a planet and a moon, next to a dressed up dead person in a coffin, whose face is doubled and hovering above the body, with large sperm cells swimming upwards, toward a computer animated head that has its brain exposed. Inside the brain there is a fetus. All this is set against a background of clouds.

This is kind of a serious/not serious/maybe serious take on religiously devotional choral music, and in a lot of ways like a successor to Marble Surf in its general make up, but with a north American Christian foundation instead of European antiquity, and I guess, in combination with themes of death, rebirth and the universe at large.

The two half-hour long tracks consist of synthetic, slightly warbled string section presets that sound like voices, and low resolution voice samples that sound like string sections, that together build soaring and light harmonic passages, which revolve around slowly clanging bronze bells. The music is minimalist in the traditional sense, but maximalist in the way in which it embellishes itself with almost baroque level of detail. Distant, echoing but very forcefully played electric piano appears, dukes it out with the church bells, and disappears. Kind of gritty arpeggios layer on top of the droning choral swells.

Being really close in overall feel to Marble Surf, this disc is definitely worth a listen, but it is also the lesser of the two, when compared – and I think it's hard not to compare them. It's like a genuinely beautiful cherub statue next to Michelangelo's David. I mean, if you see it – get it, but if you see Marble Surf – GET IT.

Alright, so unknown edition, probably limited.

32. Monopoly Child's Nightlife Band – Presents: The Aqueducts of Channel Island cd-r 2009 (Pacific City)

The Aqueducts of Channel Island was released on cd-r by Pacific City in Europe, and on cassette by Pacific City Sound Visions in the US. This is another spanner in the works that is my attempt to understand the way in which Spencer Clark's different monikers differentiate themselves from each other and what defines them individually. So, this is a Monopoly Child release, sure, but it is not a Monopoly Child Star Searchers release. Instead, we are presented with something called Monopoly Child's Nightlife Band.

What differentiates Monopoly Child's Nightlife Band from Monopoly Child Star Searchers is, for one thing, that it is operating at a slower tempo than most MCSS recordings. It is also a bit less dense in its make-up, with its main rhythms going at four beat gait speed up to trot, and mainly (but not entirely) with less tendencies to go into polyrhythmic modes, meaning that more space is left for melodic and tonal elements, which are characteristically indeterminate in nature. There is a few layers of obscuring background sounds, distant gongs and ambience, as well as tape hiss, but there is a lot of clarity of sound within the tracks. Joyful wooden marimba hoedowns are accompanied by looping voice-like embellishments that resemble tropical bird mating calls, ceremonial drum excursions cut in as if collaged on the go, large scale gamelan-like performances - the tracks zap from here to there and it all feels like an audio travel journal, with different environments cutting in and out, replacing each other or layer on top of each other. It is like smaller distinct memories of travel that occasionally meld together into a larger memory of the journey as a whole.

The cover image is a layered collage of a large waterfall overlaid with a rice paddy landscape overlaid with the night sky or perhaps outer space. The cd-r comes in a black wrap-around case and has liner notes written by Charles Berlitz for Pacific City Travel Bureaus.

The Aqueducts of Channel Island was released in unknown but

limited editions for both the cd-r and the cassette release. Parts of the release was reissued together with parts of Prince of Parrot Shooters on Pacific City Discs in 2022.

33. Vodka Soap - Interpretation "The Initiation" cd-r 2009 (Pacific City)

Hey now, this is a slab of seriously interstellar exploration meditations. Dark, contemplative, searching, collecting, engaging. Interpretation "The Initiation", just like Aqueducts of Channel Island, was released on cd-r in Europe and on cassette in the US, both by Pacific City. One of the less abstract titles within the Skaters extended universe, it really is what it sounds like – a musical interpretation of Chilean artist Roberto Matta's painting "The Initiation", an abstract expressionist/surrealist piece made in 1941. The painting depicts winding geography and a breakdown of linear space, non-Euclidian geometry and implied portals into other spaces. Light casts shadows without hitting objects and the room bends and stirs like wind and water.

There is a lot of keyboard work front and center on this recording, electric organ sounds meander over droning chords, electric piano is pushed into the red and gets touched by tape distortion. Pause button zaps the recording like instantaneous jumps in time and space. Vocal drones, pulsating harmonium, dissonant flutes and/or microphonic feedback, shimmering clusters of bells and arhythmic hand drums beam through time, and the music floats freely. It is light in gravity and dark in tonality. The tracks radiate a decidedly un-sci fi, non-technological space exploration thematic.

Interpretation "The Initiation" comes in a black wrap-around case. The cover is a Spencer Clark made interpretation of the Matta painting, made in the familiar Clark photocollage style, a vague central perspective ceremonial room within and without space, with dark and light circles arranged on pillars and on the floor, with a dark silhouette of an unknown shape against a backdrop of

the cosmos. The recording is dedicated to Roberto Matta. Both the cd-r version and the cassette version were released in unknown quantities.

34. Monopoly Child & Black Joker - Star In "Nightlife On Horseback" cd-r 2009 (Pacific City Sound Visions)

Well, a team up of two different Spencer Clark projects! I mean, as if it wasn't already slightly difficult to entirely keep them separated, what happens when they collaborate? Well, it's a bit of both of the projects jammed together, fairly straight forward. The bouncy buoyant bamboo marimba percussion of Monopoly Child does its bopping bounce clippety clop horse stride-thing, yet they sound doubled with more wooden block sounds, and little mantra like snake charmer melodies intermingle with background clatter noises. Monophonic "early" synthesizer leads solo their way through layers of alien animal noises, and all is tastefully steeped in tape hiss. Droning organ layers in differently pulsing strata, and the entire feel of this disc is, through the horse hoof rhythms and the trance inducing mantra like melodic motifs, very relaxing.

Being presented as a kind of cinematic piece, with both Monopoly Child and Black Joker starring in this record, which is called "Nightlife On Horseback", yet at the same time, it is actually called 'Star in "Nightlife On Horseback"'. That implies that the recording is a kind of soundtrack to a recording that exists only in the diegesis of the recording that is the soundtrack. This kind of differentiation from the music on the recording and the actual release itself actually feels implied throughout almost every record in this compendium, by the implication of the presentation, whereas here it is much more up front.

Released both as cd-r and cassette by Pacific City Sound Visions, the cd-r edition being presented in a black wrap around case with a cover that depicts an Egyptian temple, sitting on a rock with a

bit of vegetation in front, overlaid with an image of outer space. Uncharacteristically, there is the artists and title of the record printed in one corner in *Script MS*. The back has a bit of travel information written by the ubiquitous Spencer Clark travel companion Charles Berlitz, dated 2029.

Both the cd-r and the cassette were released in undisclosed editions.

35. James Ferraro – Jarvid 9: Gecko 2xcd-r 2009 (New Age Tapes)

This double cd-r was released at the tail end of New Age Tapes as Ferraro's own label, and it was one of three double cd-r releases that were serialized as Jarvid 9, all three of which are around two and a half hours, two hours and forty minutes long. That is kind of an out with a bang type ending to a really prolific label, surely. Themed in sci-fi around an advanced lizard civilization on a desert planet called Jarvid 9, the disc comes in a clear plastic sleeve, with a collage of what appears to be a gecko high priest on an alien planet beach, with some palm trees and orpine vegetation, against a backdrop of leopard gecko patterns. The back of the sleeve holds a piece of paper that has the tracks names in both English and in Jarvid 9 glyphs.

Musically, we are in the realm of outer space exotica, with warbling and warping technological bleeps and bloops in tight unison with primal hand drums that build billowing and pulsing rhythmic musical mantras that are interspersed by reptilian noises, frog croaks and alien guttural gargles. Computer noise gamelan layer on top of environmental sounds and joyous ribbits and chirps. Toy marimbas happily boogie on top. There are also more mechanical and techno-like tracks on here, with industrial clanging metal and hard-hitting drum machines that gets attacked by looping keyboard melodies and computer freakouts. Classically minimalist passages present themselves in a kind of sacral shroud, overlaid with what could only be described as "sensual reptilian

noises". It's a whole thing this, a world that seems complex and established way beyond the music itself.

To a large extent this sounds like various aspects of earlier Ferraro projects weaved differently - the hand drumming, the alien vocals, the way the flowing keyboard lines are played, but it is also at the threshold of something that feels new, in relation to what preceded it. There are new pulsations, new and slower ways of implementing melody and the collage technique seems to have shifted ever so slightly. Most of the keyboard sounds are also new. The sheer length of this double cd-r also feels kinda new, or at least different. It feels like a culmination. Edition unknown, but limited.

36. James Ferraro - Citrac 2xLP 2009 (Arbor)

This double LP consists of the entirety of the earlier Ferraro release *Postremo Mundus Techno-Symposium* and unused and reedited parts of *Liquid Metal - Alternative Soundtrack to: Digital Overdrive*, together with newly recorded material. It was released by Mike Pollard's Arbor label out of New York.

Extending the thematic line laid out by earlier releases such as *Last American Hero* and *Virtual Erase*, *Citrac* is the Ferraro magnum opus of the post-9/11 American zeitgeist. It's a dark head trip, this whole deal, the sleeve lets us know about it in great detail, and I'll get to that, but the music is very dark and foreboding, mostly void of harmonic modes, or melody or cohesive rhythms, consisting instead of a layered collage of bass heavy synthesizer drones, clanging metal, thumping mechanical noises, choppy electronic intermissions, distant screams and low-res explosions. Machines are barking like rabid dogs, mech suits stomp around on metal gratings, desperate voices seem to be hunted by some technological nightmare. Conversations about surveillance cut in and out. At times the music shifts gear into high adrenaline incidental rock music that is accompanied by massive choirs of fascist shouting, as well as arcade game techno interludes, which

are also teamed with the same unison shouting. When the record gets to the parts that were lifted from the Liquid Metal cd-r, the music gets a bit more melodic, or at least tonal, and it mostly gels with the more abrasive parts of Postremo Mundus and the new stuff, but towards the end it starts to feel a little disjointed from the rest of the tracks.

The front cover consists of a collage of a leather clad biker in an oil refinery landscape as viewed by a T-200 Terminator, against a backdrop of industrial steel plates. The back is a photo from the eyes of a fighter jet pilot, with the CNN logo in the corner. The fold out has a collage of the 2000 Kirk Cameron Evangelical apocalypse flick Left Behind coupled with tribal tattoos, amateur SWAT teams and stealth bomber jets. The other side of the fold out has a collage of the Cyber Tracker 2 movie poster with cut out "tactical" sunglasses, a man wearing rave pants, Nicholas Cage with a TV-screen showing static on his forehead and some kind of computer animated high rise buildings that are on fire.

I wasn't a fan of this record when it was first released. I haven't touched it in years, but hearing it now, it is a great record. I guess it needed time to land. It feels very worked through and focused, to a point. The problems that I felt that the earlier Liquid Metal cd-r had have somewhat vanished since it was reedited, but that part runs a bit long and feels unnecessary. The thematic framing seems both ahead of its time and, with the benefit of hindsight, sadly feels almost naïve and cute as compared to what the United States (and large parts of the planet) has turned into since 2009.

Citrac was released on LP in an edition of 400 copies.

37. James Ferraro - Wild World cd-r 2009 (Summer Headrush 2009 Series)

Discogs has Summer Headrush 2009 Series listed as a sublabel to Muscleworks Inc., but in my recollection, Muscleworks Inc. didn't release anything until 2010, so I will state that this is a connection

made after the fact, probably. It seems like James had an inspired summer and wanted to capture it in a separate series, which he described as being inspired by self-induced hypocapnia, also known as "the fainting game", which I guess could be described as voluntary oxygen deprivation. It makes sense, because the Summer Headrush cd-rs that I have all have that huffy feeling.

Wild World has Ferraro back in full goofy life enjoyer mode, alternating between cartoony childlike frolicking in nostalgic modes and laughing at the absurdity of modern life, with the recording as a middleman observer of the Wild World universe. Someone else is zapping along through an array of daytime TV snippets and upbeat loosely constructed song skeletons steeped in video game hooks, strange dreamscape melodies and Van Halen-inspired sunshine riffing and we're just along for the ride. Snippets of interviews with members of Heaven's Gate, Michael Jackson scandals, Elvis Presley conspiracies, and daytime documentaries about liposuction accompany the music that sounds like it's being recorded through a plastic tube. Pitch-bent and inhuman voices cut in here and there, and bursts of static slowly transform the zapping between channels into a kind of channel bleeding reality, a confusion of what is ego and what is media transmission.

The front cover is a full color laserjet print of a squeezed and pixelated California license plate that says WILDWORLD. On the back is a collage of Google Street view screen cap of a piece of the Hollywood Walk of Fame that shows Tom Cruise's star with his name blurred. This is accompanied by a pair of legs wearing glossy pink pumps, and a pit bull with cropped ears, tactical sunglasses and a tongue stud. Inside the clear plastic sleeve is also a very small, folded collage in full color of Michael Jackson, Marshall Applewhite, Elvis or an Elvis impersonator, tabloid magazines and a piece of cardboard with a message from visiting aliens.

Wild World was released in an undisclosed number of copies.

38. James Ferraro – Son of Dracula cd-r 2009 (Summer Headrush Series)

Another Summer Headrush cd-r, again inspired by the budget high of self-induced oxygen deprivation. Curiously attributed to Spencer Clark on the Muscleworks website, this is in fact Ferraro, anecdotally inspired by Clark's exotic explorations, as filtered through Ferraro's cartoony space mutant Halloween persona. Starting off with a sparse drifting through a dark void with the odd echoing Taco Bell sound, grunting blobby mutants and churning wind, then drifting into the Munsters theme song and laughing monsters, Bach's Fuge in D minor, only to exit the attraction in a lopsided haunted house soundtracked by a warped Monopoly Child Star Searchers LP and a crooning spooky Elvis. Lots of moaning ghosts share a room with maniacally laughing jack-in-the-box puppets and chattering mechanical teeth and bubbling lab equipment. It's all very Monster Mash and carnival ride oriented, low battery toys and broken animatronics, and it is equally funny and entertaining.

Thematically reminiscent of the Little Deuce Coup TV Dinners tape by Lamborghini Crystal, but altogether different in actualization. Throughout the maniacal and cartoony, Son of Dracula retains a kind of serene quality, kinda watching the stars on a beach, next to the abandoned amusement park. Lifting its name from the 1943 sequel to the original Bela Lugosi Dracula, Son of Dracula is a celebration of the apparent dichotomy between the disposability and fortified icon status that a lot of "low grade" (initially) US popular culture entities are defined by. Cheap degrading plastic forever perpetuating its own cultural impact.

The cover depicts a sunglassed caucasian dad holding the hand of a young daughter inside some kind of neon pink and green traveling carnival ride exit, behind a small pink 1950's Cadillac. Both the father and the Cadillac are wearing very large holographic eyeball sunglasses, in the dad's case hovering in front of his black wraparounds. The back is a black and white collage of two inflatable Draculas in front of a heavily tattooed male groin, with the lower belly and genitals made out to look like a demon with

its tongue out. At the end of the ...tongue, there is a large ring that appears to be holding some kind of weight. In one corner "Son of Dracula" is painted in whiteout.

Edition unknown.

39. James Ferraro - iAsia cd-r 2009 (Summer Headrush Series)

A third installment on Summer Headrush, and a monolith sci-fi/future scenario deep dive into an imagined future where the solar system has been fully colonized by human civilization, and the media landscape has adapted to fit the frame. One hour, twenty minutes long and consisting of three tracks, the disc moves around in the area between Edward Flex and Jarvid 9, with a kind of new age/new wave crossover that mixes with the alien planet pop culture part of Jarvid 9: Gecko, but without the alien species-additions or frog sounds. Ferraro builds fairly "normal" song structure or at least discrete elements of pop music, and economically enhances them with simple materials that make them feel fully futuristic and other.

This disc has also always had me thinking of a Sublime Frequencies CD called Radio Sumatra: The Indonesian FM Experience, that consists of collages of music as recorded from a variety of different Sumatran radio stations, and while iAsia is less diverse in how it presents its proposed genres, the kind of variety pack presentation with jingles as features is kind of the same, as well as the implied Asian popular cultural content, together with the projected eavesdropping-style listening experience.

Spanning from a radio station on a colonized and fully urbanized Mars to a casino on Neptune via an interplanetary Bengali media outlet, the tunes cover upbeat, rhythm heavy music that could be soundtracking an off-planet aerobic workout, to contemplative nocturnal dense and busy streetscape music, quickly bouncing from commercial jingles that you pass by on your way to wha-

tever place you'd cash your credits for fuel cells and dan-dan or whatever. At times, iAsia also goes into the same areas as the Skelesand Extra Earth Morph-disc by Pacific Rat Temple Band. Overall very melodic and approachable.

The cover is a color print that depicts a sprawling nighttime skyscraper cityscape, with an off-angle and reshaped cut out of the Golden Pagoda in Bangkok. There is also a large jumbotron showing an image of Dennis Rodman with the words "Just Live" underneath.

iAsia was released in an unknown edition.

40. James Ferraro - Rapture Adrenaline VHS 2009 (Hundebiss & Music City)

Released on Italian label Hundebiss and Music City, which I think is a Belgian label. Hundebiss is renamed Hundebiss Visions for the occasion, and the video is released as presented as a Hell TV production.

Rapture Adrenaline is not a music release, but a feature length crudely edited video collage backed with a textual narrative that comes with the tape. Compiled from a variety of movies and TV-shows, mainly centered around 90's sci-fi with a few Robin Williams comedies added for good measure, the video cuts from clip to clip, unedited in any other way, stringing together snippets of things that are easily understood as exciting and inspirational for Ferraro, and in a way the entire thing reads like a video mood board for his more sci-fi/adrenaline oriented musical explorations. However, as this is released with an accompanying textual narration, which admittedly is as incoherent as it is tantalizing, it is actually comparable to program music, meaning instrumental music that is supposed musically tell a story, which is also presented in the form of program notes, written text in a pamphlet, which is exactly what is going on with Rapture Adrenaline, only as the video version of that concept. Cyborgs, CGI, car chases, skatebo-

ards, robots, fight scenes and other high adrenaline escapades push toward the red, aiming toward media overload, and as hinted in the program, to approach the blue screen of death associated with CPU overload.

The VHS cover depicts closeups of digitally torn jeans, with a cut out biker jacket wearing man with a blond bowl cut and Oakley Eye Jacket sunglasses. The program has a full color collage of various movie covers, *Class of 1999*, *Trick r Treat* and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* among others, and a throwback to *Virtual Erase* typed out. The program makes reference to Rochester, New York, which is James Ferraro's place of birth, and *Acid Eagle*, a Ferraro moniker from 2005, which in itself is a reference to a Siloah track.

This video needs to be viewed in context of what it stands for, and while it plays like a greatest clips type deal, it also feels distinctly personal and intimate. A deep cut and entirely for diehard fans, it is still genuinely a labor of love.

Rapture Adrenaline was released in an edition of 150 numbered PAL VHS tapes.

41. Monopoly Child Star Searchers – Bamboo For Two LP 2010 (Olde English Spelling Bee)

This, I think, might mark the spot where Spencer Clark updates his recording equipment, because this LP sounds way less muffled and dark than any of his earlier material. By no means is it a hi-fi endeavor, but there is noticeably more clarity of sound here. The only Clark release that I own from 2010, released on LP by Olde English Spelling Bee.

Overall, this feels like a very luxurious release, with full color artwork with a different layout style than the by now well established black and white photocollages that Clark normally frames his recordings with up to this point. A backlit assortment of palm

leaves and a creeping vine, with a medallion style portrait of Clark with a red macaw on his shoulder, framed with "Pacific City Romance Audio" on top and "Monopoly Child Star Searchers" at the bottom, beneath "Bamboo For Two" in bold powder blue lettering, all very vintage Harlequin novel in appearance. The centrum labels have color pictures of a couple of parrots and included as liner notes is a sensual poetic meditation from Charles Berlitz. The back has a color photo from Bird Talk Magazine of a green parrot, captioned "Charles Berlitz" and portrait images of Lieven Martens (the artist formerly known as Dolphins Into The Future), Eva Van Deuren (Belgian artist also known as Orphan Fairytale) and Rocco Martini (a street busker caricature drawing of James Ferraro), all of whom are credited as contributors to the record, although their contributions aren't necessarily easy to spot throughout.

There are a few places where unfamiliar inflections during a flute hoe-down and at times a particularly nervous keyboard line appear, but then there are a few instances of more obvious outside influence, particularly synthesizer sounds that do not feel at all Clarkian, and major key dueling keyboards that duke it out on top of classic Monopoly Child bouncing bamboo rhythms that kinda clash. Throughout the LP, the music is decidedly Monopoly Child-like, but there are areas where the collaborative effort makes it sound like something else and it can be a bit of an immersion breaker, but at the same time it radiates friendship and good times, so it is hard to hold that against Bamboo For Two, even though it makes it a bit less.

I was about to pull it from this compendium, citing the decision that I wouldn't include collaborative efforts, but as it still is presented as a solo release by Clark, and since it is paired with Make Mine Macaw, that I will get to further down the line, I will keep it in.

Bamboo For Two was released on LP in an unknown edition.

42. Jim Ferraro – On Air cd-r 2010 (Muscleworks Inc)

Carrying the travelling carnival theme over from Son of Dracula, paired with the 50's sci fi and rock n roll-aesthetic, the full color cover of this disc is a real eye magnet, with a neon pastel carnival ride-style airbrushed painting of a pink Stratocaster against a night sky background featuring a classic flying saucer, and with a 50's modernist On Air electric sign that would have been lifted right out of a Memphis rock radio broadcasting booth. The flip (which actually might be the front, I'm not sure) has an airbrushed neon green glowing radio blaring loudly while being dialed by two long green alien fingers. Inside the black plastic case, there is a neon pastel painted juke box which has two free floating eyes held up by their optic nerves coming up from behind it. In front is a guitar pick with Flying V guitars on it. The disc itself is a pro printed cd-r with a monochrome print of the cover on it.

On Air starts out in the most UPA Cartoon-take-on-Vangelis way possible, then shifting into some really catchy rockabilly and then switching in between triumphant and pop hook-y synthesizer workouts, splat sound effects, excited radio show hosts, crickets, nocturnal bird sounds and joyous explorations of cartoon mindscapes. Remember the Tokens styled falsetto melodics that appeared on that early Wooden Cupboard 3" cd-r? On Air features a short cover of the Tokens classic The Lion Sleeps Tonight. On Air is like an exposé of Ferraro's life affirming side, unadulterated happiness and tranquility, like spending a summer night awake, alone, stargazing with the rock n roll station on while snacking on junk food and slurpees, backlit by a TV set. Every here and there, a song snippet occurs that have intelligible vocals, which I believe is a first. 50's rock n roll, surf twang and energetic synth tracks shift in and out of focus, like someone restlessly dialing that radio, and as it is set in an environment - crickets and birds, remember? - this is another instance of where we as listeners are witnessing someone else listening to the radio. It's like a stream of consciousness shower of loose parts of popular culture, even down to details not being in place of something, but actual quotations, Close Encounters, heck – even Bryan Adams pop up in

here, and despite this it all feels decidedly ...well I feel pretentious even typing it out, but 'experimental', for lack of better words.

On Air was released in an edition of 150 copies. It was later rereleased in an expanded double LP version by Underwater Peoples, limited to an undisclosed number of copies.

43. James Ferraro - Feed Me cd-r 2010 (Muscleworks Inc)

Another Muscleworks pro-printed cd-r in which Ferraro truly starts to write SONGS. *Feed Me* is the culmination of all of his new wave, rock n roll and glam metal impulses. We are still in a kind of loose-jointed place, where most songs are less than a minute long, and they appear, disappear and sometimes reappear as if run through the mind of a person in a creative and jittery mania. Despite this, they are the most song-like songs that we have gotten from Ferraro so far, with distinguishable parts and intelligible vocals. *Feed Me* has moments of meltdown, where the songs kind of disintegrate or get run over by various distractions – commentary, unintelligible dialogue, the odd sound effect and channel bleed, like shifting through waves of different ideas and being stuck in the interference. There is also a feeling of joyous solitude throughout, like someone really enjoying their alone time. At one point there is a short interlude that sounds like a heavy metal Christmas track, a theme that surprisingly recurs at another point. At times the pop perfection, the attention to song hooks points in a direction toward Prince and in other places there are ecstatic and pastoral expressions that go toward Popol Vuh territory. A Cyndi Lauper cover makes an appearance. It's still not "normal" music, by the way, but Ferraro is certainly standing on the precipice at this point.

The cover has a kind of back in the day BDSM meets the youthful delinquency of Beavis and Buttthead orientation, depicting lewd classifieds and pyramid studded wristbands with the title in slimy

cartoon letters. There are also multiple bloodshot eyeballs scattered throughout, all in glorious black and white. The liner notes contain lyrics about a cannibal on the run.

Feed Me was released in an edition of 150 copies.

44. James Ferraro - Pixarni cd-r 2010 (Muscleworks Inc)

Pixarni was released as a companion piece to *Feed Me* and *On Air*, meaning that you could only order it if you bought *Feed Me* and *On Air*, and it was only available from Olde English Spelling Bee and the wonderful but now defunct Glasgow record store Volcanic Tongue, which was run by David Keenan and Heather Leigh Murray. Pro printed, but contained in a clear plastic sleeve, instead of the slimline black plastic case that *On Air* and *Feed Me* came in.

Definitely the odd man out of the three, departing from *Feed Me* and *On Air*'s more fast-paced, song collage with drums and guitar and vocals and instead fully relying on synthesizer as the only played instrument, only with the odd sampled vocal noise to deviate from this focus. The tracks are long, uninterrupted, and not centered around prominent looping techniques. Instead, Ferraro takes his time and lets cold and sparse beams of synth pulse through space, at times almost nihilistic in outlook, bordering on menacing and then slowly flowing into areas of exploratory curiosity. Digital metallic bell sounds develop rhythms that feel more like the pulsations of a complex organism rather than a regular musical beat. Sonically, *Pixarni* is recorded with a fuller sound than most Ferraro releases, and on the second and last track, a very deep and forceful synthesizer sweep appears that is almost shocking to experience.

The full color cover consists of a purple tinted CGI collage of two television screens framing a liquid metal ocean, with an island or rock formation in the background. Amorphous human heads

protrude from the TV screens and three purple vortexes are open over the surface of the liquid metal ocean. The pro printed cd-r has a detail of the ocean and Pixarni printed on top of it. The liners discuss alien abduction experiences as subconscious manifestations of trauma experienced during gestation or birth.

Pixarni was released in a limited edition of 50 copies that required you to buy *On Air* and *Feed Me* to enable purchase.

45. James Ferraro – Night Dolls With Hairspray LP 2010 (Olde English Spelling Bee)

Night Dolls With Hairspray is the real culmination of Ferraro's impulse to write rock music and making fleshed out songs as a direct effect of this impulse. I mean, in the context of Ferraro, not in the context of ordinary song production, but that kinda goes without saying at this point.

Continuing the line that started with around the Lamborghini Crystal project and more directly the development this line had with *Feed Me* and *On Air*, *Night Dolls With Hairspray* thematically references MTV, valley girl culture and memory trash. Ferraro presents a cohesive album's worth of songs that rely heavily on the distinct Classical melodic motifs of Mozart, the melodic bells, sleighbells and romantic sentimentalism of Christmas tunes, and bouncy catchiness of new wave and power pop, often alluding to Cheap Trickian song hooks and harmonies. Interludes of a silent narrator munching on snacks connect one song to the next, and Ferraro's love of various splat sound effects is still evident. Helium cartoon hallucinations play fright night hair metal songs about high school masochism and other fringe desires, all delivered in a Big Spender declamatory vocal style. At one point, a song appears that sound like a pop reimagining of the Marble Index cd-r, furthering the very cohesive musical vocabulary that Ferraro established over years. Everything has a very thin latex balloon type sound, or like listening to a mono speaker through a narrow

plastic tube, which makes the music feel private and secret.

The full color sleeve depicts a wall of TV screens showing static and what at least to me appears to be Ferraro wearing the head of Freddie Mercury in drag. Several pink Stratocasters float in front of the screens. The image is bordered by pyramid studded leather and in the foreground is a hand with hot pink nail polish holding a remote control, two feet with drying nail polish and peripherally some red hair in hair rollers. The back has a similar wall of TV screens showing Ferraro in front of a brick wall reenacting Edward Munch's painting The Scream, as broadcast by MTV. In one of the screens, Ferraro's eyes are bugging out and bloodshot. In the foreground, a hand with red nail polish, protruding from a white sleeve covered in red lipstick marks is holding a hot pink landline telephone. The album title is written with in a similar style as Live at Slimmer Beach.

Edition unknown, but I would bet it wasn't severely limited.

46. Fourth World Magazine Presents: The Spectacle of Light Abductions LP 2011 (Pacific City Sound Visions)

Spencer Clark's only release of 2011 was put out by Pacific City Sound Visions, and as such it is a quite high effort release. The first release under the name of Fourth World Magazine, which in itself is not a completely new entity in the Pacific City canon, as it has been referenced as a publication related to Charles Berlitz on multiple occasions prior to 2011. The Spectacle of Light Abductions is presented as a 12" full color magazine that is accompanied by the LP. The magazine contains a longer piece on alien abductions written by Charles Berlitz, making it a physical manifestation of what has previously been referenced.

Musically, The Spectacle of Light Abductions follows Bamboo For Two in having a slightly clearer sound than most previous Clark releases, but the recording is still noticeably marked by tape grain

and tape compression. At once technological and organic, with a heavy lean into a variety of Mark II Spencer Clark synthesizer sounds, glistening long notes and playfully investigative pitched up keyboard stabs cruise and shine between zig zagging delay effects. A lot of layering and cosmic drones envelop jittery and inquisitive energy as the music builds and sends out feelers in all directions. Looping pitch shifted vocals hint at a de-comedyized take on the Yip-yips or Planet Koozebane merdlidops aliens. Clark allows the music to take slightly silly directions, but it has the air of situations that are silly because of their alien nature, not because someone is trying to make you laugh. A slow-paced hand drum rhythm appears, following a pattern hitherto unheard on Clark outings. The last quarter of the record drifts into a much earthlier expression, with harmonium or harmonium-like organ drones and meandering semi-melodic organ runs accompanied by polyrhythmic hand drumming, which ends up turning entirely alien.

The Charles Berlitz penned article in *Fourth World Magazine* revolves around a spiritual festival that might have been held at the old Robert Rice Stadium in Salt Lake City in 1984 called *The Spectacle of Light*, in which abductions by alien lifeforms and spiritual mass experiences are studied as potentially overlapping occurrences. In parallel with what Ferraro did on *Pixarni*, Berlitz presents the idea of alien abduction as related to the psychological regression back into the birth canal and connects the abduction experience as the impetus to being rebirthed into a new, spiritual self.

The sleeve is, as said, in itself a full color magazine, with stills from an abduction event at the Rice Stadium, as well as various UFO radar imagery, on brown canvas backgrounds, with a grainy video still of the stadium with a Grey alien superimposed on the front. The back has a video still of the fully attended stadium.

Spectacle of Light Abductions was released in an unknown edition.

47. Monopoly Child Star Searchers – Make Mine, Macaw LP 2018 (Discrepant)

Make Mine, Macaw is the second installment, though the third to be released, in Clark's Tropical Bird Romance Audio trilogy, which begun with 2010's *Bamboo For Two* and concluded with 2016's *The Garnet Toucan* (which I don't own). The reason for this chronological warp seems to be two-fold. *Make Mine, Macaw* was initially released as a 2010 tour cd-r that is a completely different recording. Then came *Bamboo For Two*, and according to Clark, the *Make Mine, Macaw* LP was recorded simultaneously as *Bamboo For Two*, but remained unreleased. 2016 saw the release of *The Garnet Toucan*, making it the third installment, since the second was already in the can, and finally the *Make Mine, Macaw* LP was released in 2018, on Tenerife label *Discrepant*, which by the way is the co-parent label of *Pacific City Discs* that was mentioned many pages ago.

Following in the footsteps of upped-fidelity Clarkian extravagance, *Make Mine, Macaw* has the same relative clarity of sound as *Bamboo For Two* and *Fourth World Magazine*, although not the razor sharp cleanliness of the Clark output past *The Spectacle of Light Abductions*. Making use of the well weathered tools that make up the foundation of most *Monopoly Child Star Searchers* recordings, with the addition of newer acquisitions, like icy chilled glass synthesizer tubular bells and a new set of gnome chants plus a subset of rhythm variations, *Make Mine, Macaw* finds its groove from the needle drop. The bouncing horseback one, two, three-four-five rhythm pattern is very hard to not get caught up in, and topped with gentle splashing water and dialogue between various birdlike keyboards plus snake charmer electric organs, and delivered in the confident way that you'd watch a streetside cobbler or food vendor excel at their craft, *Make Mine, Macaw* has that same kind of experienced demeanor to back itself up. The music feels familiar in every sense, but also evolved, with added peripherals, like counter melodies and human/parrot crossover vocals. The projected environment also feels a lot more current, like a modern tropical life, the hustle and bustle of hot streets, everyday culture and, of course, exotic birds. What more could you want?

The full color cover is also like an evolved Spencer Clark photo-collage, containing familiar elements like a temple ruin, the sun, a palm tree and superimposed cosmos, but the color scheme and the bordering frame of golden lines is also a new flair. The powder blue back cover features an umbrella cockatoo and a long poem penned by Charles Berlitz.

Make Mine, Macaw was released in an unknown edition, but it's pressed vinyl, so probably not less than 500.

Beyond the pavillion

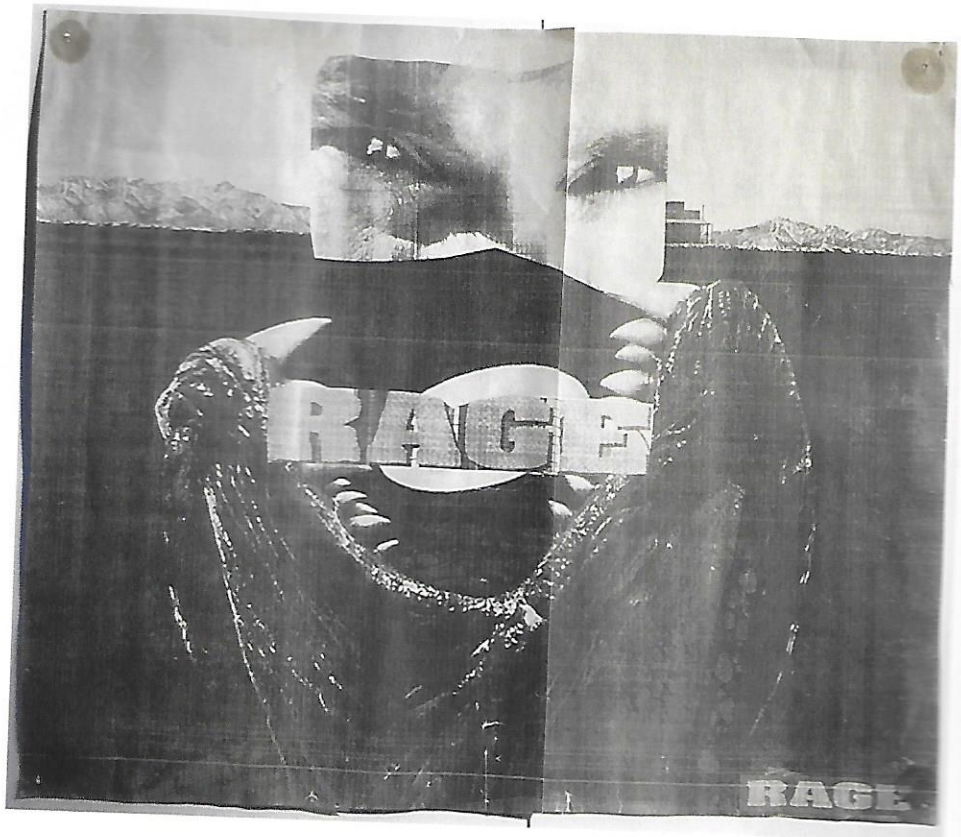
From a very collectively shared beginning, James Ferraro and Spencer Clarks musical journeys over time have taken them on parallel yet individual branching and winding paths. Where Ferraro ventures more and more into a very dark kind of zeitgeist, coupled with parallel sci-fi universes, Clark goes toward paradisiac and fantastic locations, sometimes interspersed with nightmarish visions and/or crossovers, where Ferraro explores consumerism and dark religious spaces, Clark goes into museums and tourist traps as well as documentarian stances and travel journals. While Ferraro dives headfirst into dark psychedelic warbled reality, Clark carries with him pockets full of travel snapshots, ticket stubs for archeological sites and cocktail receipts. And yet, all these different paths, these different and at times opposing directions, coexist in what to me is a very cohesive collective universe. I guess what it comes down to, is how environmental the music is, from its most melodic and harmonious moments to its more textural and conceptual aspects, all of this music evokes a sense of place and has a distinctive framework for how these environments feel. While the framework for the recordings themselves differ and shift and warp and flicker, the outer framework that encapsules all of it is unifying and unified. This, I think, has to do with the fact that it all was made by two people who seems to have bounced a lot of musical, philosophical and cultural ideas off of each other, that had a very particular way of viewing the world together, and who used this dynamic to develop their own branches from a common tree. There is also a lot to be said about the physical aspects of how this was achieved, meaning the use of low-grade recording equipment, thrift store treasures and endless imagination. Considering how much the later stuff differs from the initial steps taken by the Skaters, who after all were a way more noise oriented (albeit at low volume) band, it is fascinating how coherent the whole shift is, and how much you can trace it backwards. There are constant foreshadowing and frequent throwbacks connecting the recordings across time.

After Night Dolls With Hairspray, Ferraro made a very sharp turn and changed up his entire presentation, while remaining in a kind of exploratory mode of various nuances of contemporary life and

society and their implications, frequently extrapolating extended models of ideas projected from modern day cultural practices, following the trajectory that he started around *Last American Hero*, but with tools and presentational modes that are mostly unfamiliar with his production up until before 2011. This shift started with the digital only-release *Condo Pets* and then more prominently with the *Far Side Virtual LP*. Around 2014, Clark also shifted his path into something that sounds and presents less like unearthed ephemera or documentarian archeology and more like modern symphonic works and highly curated museum exhibits, starting around the HR Giger's *Studiolo* cassette releases by *Typhonian Highlife*. Clark's thematic focus has also crystallized into explorations of the light and dark aspects of human and non-human civilizations, still with a heavy incline toward ancient cultures and hermetic knowledge, intertwined with nightmarish apparitions of the aspects of human psyche as manifested through archetypes of horror films such as *Hellraiser* and *Alien*. These shifts are greatly intriguing in their own right, but to me they feel like distinct new areas of expression, that while founded in a wide spectrum of ways in what preceded them, need to be presented and discussed in a different setting than this compendium.

What is on all the releases in this text, the tapes, cd-rs, LPs and videos, it's not "just" music or ideas, even – I am going to use words of a character that I might regret, but this, all this, is genuinely a *gesamkunstwerk*. It's the whole deal, kid. Music, yes, but also – and not only – places, spaces, geography, heck, whole worlds that overlap and intermingle and shape each other, kick each other around. From the most ceremonial and dusky *Skaters* records to the hyper-commercialized semi-future fascist dystopias to the romantic parrot getaways, it is ALL CONNECTED, a universe that we get to see glimpses of, scrying in smoky mirrors, peering through plastic membranes or inside travel journals, an unending and complex world that perpetually has its back turned to us, while we are on our toes trying to find more pieces for a puzzle that will never be fully finished.

Martin Nilsson
December 2022



James Ferraro - Rage (collage, 2009)

